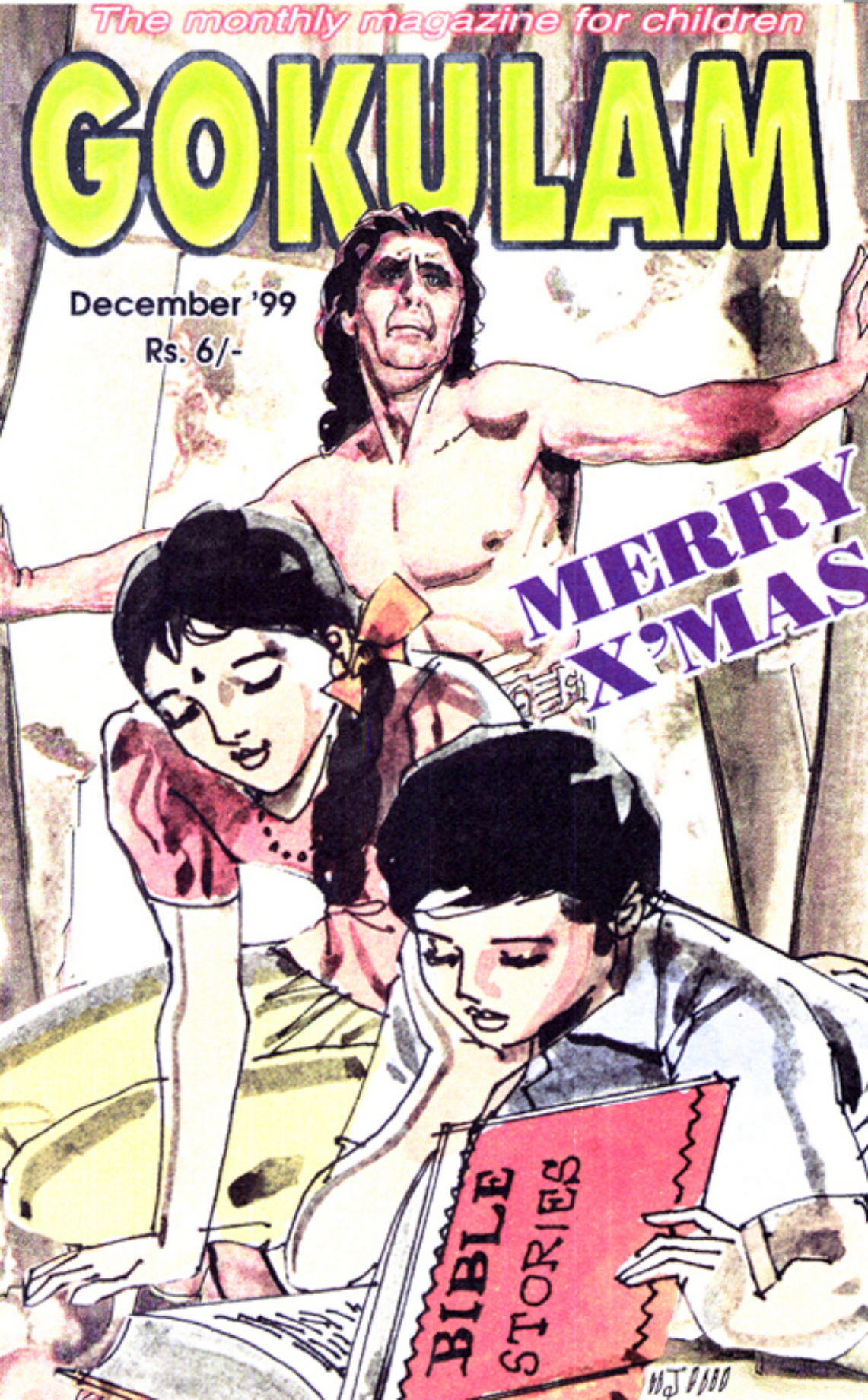
The monthly magazine for children

GOKULAM

December '99

Rs. 6/-



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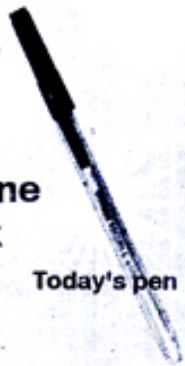

Today's pen

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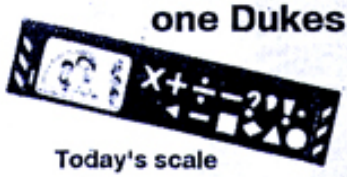


Today's scale

Hurry! Offer valid until stocks last!

* Products also available without the promotion

GOKULAM

Vol. XII, No. 6 DECEMBER 1999

Dear children,

The cyclone which hit Orissa took away a lot from the joy of Deepavali all over India. Of course lamps were lit and crackers were exploded, but with a heavy heart. As we wore our new clothes for Deepavali, our hearts went out to those people of Orissa who have been deprived of food and shelter.

The cyclone was so severe that thousands of people died and perhaps an equal number of cattle were lost. It is difficult to assess the damage to crops and dwellings but we can have an idea when we learn that the Chief Minister of Orissa has asked for Rs. 10,000 crores as aid from the Central Government.

The suffering still continues, and it looks as though the diseases following the cyclone will prove to be worse than the cyclone itself. The army has been asked to help. Several voluntary organisations including the Red Cross are working round the clock and neighbouring states have adopted one or two districts each to bring relief to victims and to rehabilitate them.

Help has been pouring in from all over India and abroad. All of us can help by donating what we can either in the form of cash or old clothes like shirts and pants or frocks and sweaters to help the poor people of Orissa ward off the cold.

Normal life is very very slowly returning to Orissa. Let us hope that atleast the new year will bring more development and prosperity to the state.

Love,

K. Rajendran,
Editor

Of all created things the loveliest,
And most divine are children.
— William Canton

IN GOKULAM THIS MONTH

Editorial 1
Letter Box 3
Subscription form 57

Stories

Samson and Delilah
- Cover story 7

A navy for Jayabalpore
- A Jayabalan story 9
The village boy - Serial 20
Grandpa's gift 28

From our readers

Nanny's christmas present 24
Mr. Shetty's shoes 46
Soldier 51
A surprise gift - Petpals 63
Rendezvous with a ghost 74

Retold stories

A useful being 54
Brave Nisha 73

Mythology

The Achilles' heel 69

Play

The big catch 30

Poems

Debt trap 4
Balloons 13
It's exam time! 19
The rain 37
Man and animal 76

Feature

What is a 'white elephant'? 14

Article

Why are algae important? 26

In the wild

Killer snakes of the sea 18
China's cuddly bear 58
Snippets 16
Viewpoint 60
Special viewpoint 62
Experience 70

Potpourri

Hello, doctor! 7
The impious boy 36
Tell me why? 43
Fact-file 50
My neighbour's maid 55
For your bookshelf 56
Did you know? 68
Newsbits 77
Grandma worm 78

Sports

The Olympic games 65
Sports page 80

Comics

Fantasia 28
Appu and Kuku 44
The princess who never cried 48
Balltoons 52

Puzzles and activities

Shakespeare puzzle 23
Creative corner 26
Budding chef 31
Puzzle pages 34
Art-gallery 40
Answer page 42
Do you know these words? 78

Cover Illustration : JAYARAJ

LETTER BOX

✉ I am a regular reader of your magazine. I consider Gokulam to be the cheapest knowledge bank available for children.

I have a suggestion. You can provide a topic for the readers and ask them to write to you opposing or supporting the topic.

The best three entries can be published and rewarded. I am sure this will be an encouragement to budding essayists.

P.R. Arun,
Poojapura, Trivandrum.

Dear Arun,

The viewpoint column is specially designed for this purpose. This column is open to readers. They can debate on any topic under the sun.

✉ I enjoy reading Gokulam. Please start a column for penpals.

Sriram R. Das,
Ottapalam.

Dear Sriram,

We are considering your suggestion. Children interested in having their names entered in the penpal column must give in their name, age, full house address and hobbies.

✉ This is my first letter to Gokulam. The story 'The Letter' by Janakan was excellent. I thank you for your suggestion in 'Hello, Doctor!' To which address should I send in my articles?

M. Archana,
Jamshedpur.

Dear Archana,

You can send in your articles to the address given on the last page of Gokulam.

✉ I am a new reader of Gokulam. I like it very much. To which address should I send my contributions to the magazine?

Shwetha, V.,
Bangalore.

Dear Shwetha,

Welcome aboard.

Pl. read the reply given to Archana's letter.

✉ It was my friend Deepa who introduced me to Gokulam. I like it very much. Can you publish

more details about the tribal people of different countries? You can also publish information about the cultures of different countries. I am weak in English. What can I do to improve my English? Also, please tell me how I should contribute to the art gallery.

K. Geetha, Chennai.

Dear Geetha,

Welcome to the Gokulam readers' forum. We shall try to publish information on the cultures of different countries.

Read good books — fiction and non-fiction. It will improve your language.

Read the reply given to Archana's letter.

✉ Thank you for bringing out such a wonderful magazine. M. Rajesh, in his story, (winner of 1st prize in horror story contest) did not visit any place where he found things scary even though the title was 'A Strange Visit'. How did you select this story then?

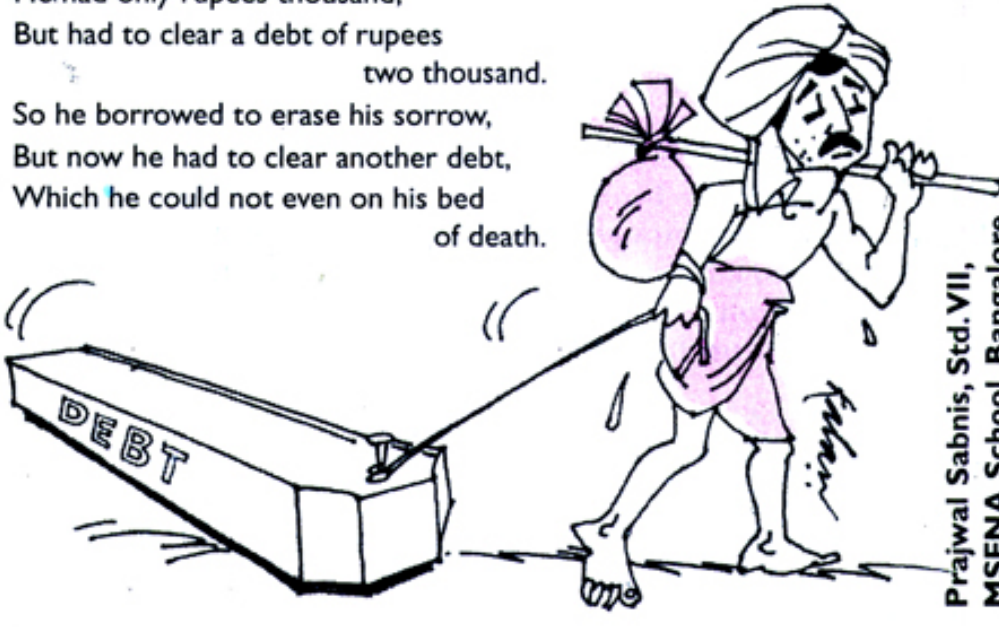
Nithya Hariharan, Std. V
Fatima HS, Mumbai.

Dear Nithya,

The visitors that scared the boy were monkeys. Don't you agree with me that the boy is very much like us all? He was so scared of monkey s shadow. They hadn't been on the tree the previous day.

DEBT TRAP

Once there was a peasant,
Whose face was pleasant.
He looked happy,
But he was unhappy.
He had only rupees thousand,
But had to clear a debt of rupees
two thousand.
So he borrowed to erase his sorrow,
But now he had to clear another debt,
Which he could not even on his bed
of death.



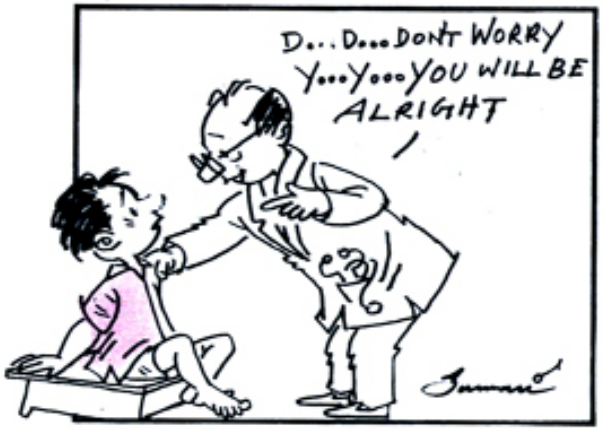
Prajwal Sabnis, Std. VII, MSFNA School, Bangalore.

WHAT ARE HICCUPS?

D. Johnson, Chennai.

? Why do some people stammer?

! Speech requires the complete co-ordination of larynx, cheeks, tongue and lips. A person who stammers lacks such co-ordination. Spasms occur in the speech muscles



and hence he gets stuck with the first sound. For eg, instead of saying mother, he would say 'm-m-mother'.

Physiologically speech involves co-ordination of many aspects of brain functions. Disease of these parts of the brain can lead to stammering. Usually this disorder is connected with emotional disturbances like fear, anxiety and nervousness. Heredity can also play a part.

**** N. Muthukrishnan, Koodankulam.***

? Why do we hiccup, doctor?

! Hiccups are short, sharp and very sudden breaths of air. They happen when our breath- ing muscles jerk, making us gasp. The diaphragm is situated between the chest and the abdomen. While inhaling air it goes down and touches the stomach. During this time the lungs are filled with air. When we exhale it goes up and the air comes out of the lungs. The process of respiration continues without any sound.

Sometimes due to the formation of acidity or excessive gas in the stomach, the diaphragm gets irritated. As a result, it contracts suddenly. The air entering the lungs is obstructed and makes a peculiar sound. This is called the hiccup. It can also be triggered by eating or drinking too much or too fast. Usually hiccups are harmless. Sometimes it may be an alarming signal for diseases of the liver, kidney and brain.

**** A. Navaneethan, Coimbatore.***

? I am 18. I am only five feet

Dr. G. Ganesan

tall. Will hormone injections help me to grow tall?

! Height factors are linked to heredity and genes. If either of your parents is short then this could be the cause of your lack of inches. Consult your family doctor regarding your food habits. He may refer you, if he thinks it necessary, to an endocrinologist. He can decide whether you really need any hormones.

**** K. Cherian, Chennai.***

? Where was HIV detected first? When was it diagnosed for the first time in India?

! Human Immunodeficiency Virus, i.e., HIV, was first discovered in 1981 in the USA. In India, the first case of AIDS — a deadly disease caused by HIV - was diagnosed in 1986 in a businessman from Mumbai. He contacted the disease after a blood transfusion given to him in the USA.

**** R. Latha, Ooty.***

? Why do we feel sleepy after a heavy meal?

! In the body of an average adult five litres of blood circulates. Under normal conditions the liver receives 28% of the total heart output; kidneys 24%; muscles 15%; brain 14% and the remaining 19% goes to the other parts of the body.

However, the quantity may vary depending on the requirement of the body organs. For example, after a meal, a large amount of blood goes to the stomach and the intestine as they require more blood for digestion. This causes a deficiency of blood in the brain and hence the brain becomes less active. This induces sleepiness - a signal to the body to take rest.

**** S. Nagarajan, Melappathi.***

? Please suggest first-aid measures for cut-wounds.

! Clean the wound with soap and water. Use cotton wool or a clean handkerchief. Place a wide layer of gauze over the wound. Apply a thick pad of gauze or cotton wool over it. Finish with several firm (but not tight) turns of a bandage which should fully cover the pad. The wounded portion of the body should be elevated if there is bleeding.

SAMSON and DELILAH

Here's a story from the Old Testament.

Long ago on a hill called Zorah in Philistia lived a childless couple. They prayed for a child who will deliver them from the tyranny of the Philistines.

One day a vision came to the wife. It said, "you will have a son of indomitable strength. He will rescue Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. The child should be dedicated to the service of god. His hair should not be cut. He should not drink wine."

The child was born. He was christened Samson. He was brought up according to the directions of the vision. Samson grew up into a man of great strength. Samson befriended the Philistines. He even wanted to marry a Philistine woman.

His parents dared not to stand in his way.

Once on his way to visit the Philistine woman, Samson was confronted by a lion. He seized its jaws and tore apart the animal. On his second visit to the woman's house, he passed by the lion's carcass. He found that bees had hived honey on the carcass. He feasted on the honey.

One day, at a marriage festival he introduced a riddle. He promised raiment to the person who answered it. The riddle was — 'Out of the eater came forth meat and out of the story came

forth sweetness'.

Samson's friends had no answer to the riddle. They threatened his wife to reveal it. She told them about the honey episode. Samson had to give raiment to the men who had answered the riddle. He was enraged when he found out how the men had learnt the answer.

Samson's wife deserted him sometime later. Meanwhile, his problems with the Philistines continued. Samson set fire to their cornfields. The Philistines killed Samson's wife and her family as a revenge.

This enraged Samson. He wreaked havoc on the Philistines. The Philistines waited for the day they could defeat Samson.

Meanwhile, Samson fell in love with a girl called Delilah. So much was he smitten by her that he even forgot what was designed for him by the Eternal. The Philistines used Delilah to find out the secret of his strength. He told her that the secret of his strength lay in the uncut locks of his hair.

One night Delilah had his locks cut. Samson was dismayed and lost all nerve to fight. He was chained and made to grind corn.

The Philistines celebrated their victory over Samson by drinking and feasting. Samson was despondent. He recalled his childhood and thought of his mother. He prayed for strength to escape the chains that bound him.

One day, he tried to break away from the chains. The chains gave way and Samson brought down the entire prison house. Thousands of Philistines died. So did he, amidst his enemies.

A JAYABALAN STORY

A NAVY FOR JAYABALPORE

King Jayabalan wanted to have a navy for Jayabalpore. He wished that his country should have tall ships that would go around the world and make a number of conquests.

He mentioned his desire to the home minister, Sigainasam, and the minister for publicity, Solmannan.

"Of course, your majesty" said Sigainasam. "We could build up a strong navy."

"Most countries have an army and a navy" said Solmannan. "But we have only an army."

"Not a very good one either" said Ganabadi, the minister for heavy industry, who had just then come in.

"All right" said the king. "Now, how do we go about organising a navy?"

"First we must ask the finance minister if he has enough funds for this" said Ganabadi.

"We can always collect some extra tax and make enough money for the navy" said Sigainasam impatiently.

"We could call it the Naval Tax" said Solmannan, looking around proudly as if he had said something very clever.

"So you think it is possible to start a naval force?" the king asked eagerly.

"Certainly, your majesty" said Sigainasam. "When your majesty wants something, it is our duty to see that you get it."

The king beamed with pleasure. "Send for the finance minister" he said, and a messenger was sent to get Varisumai, the finance minister.

"Let us call Ayalaan, too" said Ganabadi. As the minister for foreign affairs, he should also be consulted. Another messenger went for Ayalaan.

While they waited for these two, the king started thinking about how the navy would be. He imagined himself as a great naval hero. He remembered a famous painting of a great explorer standing aboard his ship, scanning the ocean with keen eyes. The king imagined himself to be a great conqueror standing grandly on the deck of his ship, surrounded by numerous sailors. One of them was saying: "Look, your majesty - land!" And then the arrival at the new land, and perhaps a brief naval battle before the conquest. Jayabalan the Great, like

Alexander!

"Your majesty, Ayalaan and Varisumai have come" said Solmannan, waking the king up from his reverie.

"His majesty wishes to have a navy" Sigainasam told Ayalaan and Varisumai.

"But your majesty, that is not possible" said Ayalaan.

"Why not?" Solmannan rasped. "The ancient Greeks had one. The Vikings had their tall ships. The Spanish had their Armada, and the British had Francis Drake and his ships. So why can't we put Jayabalpore on the naval map of the world?"

"You yourself have told us about the British Navy, Ayalaan" said Sigainasam.

"How could there be a navy in Jayabalpore?" Varisumai asked.

"Why, don't you have any funds?" the king asked.

"It is not that, your majesty" Ayalaan said. "We have no coastline. So how can we have a navy without a sea?"

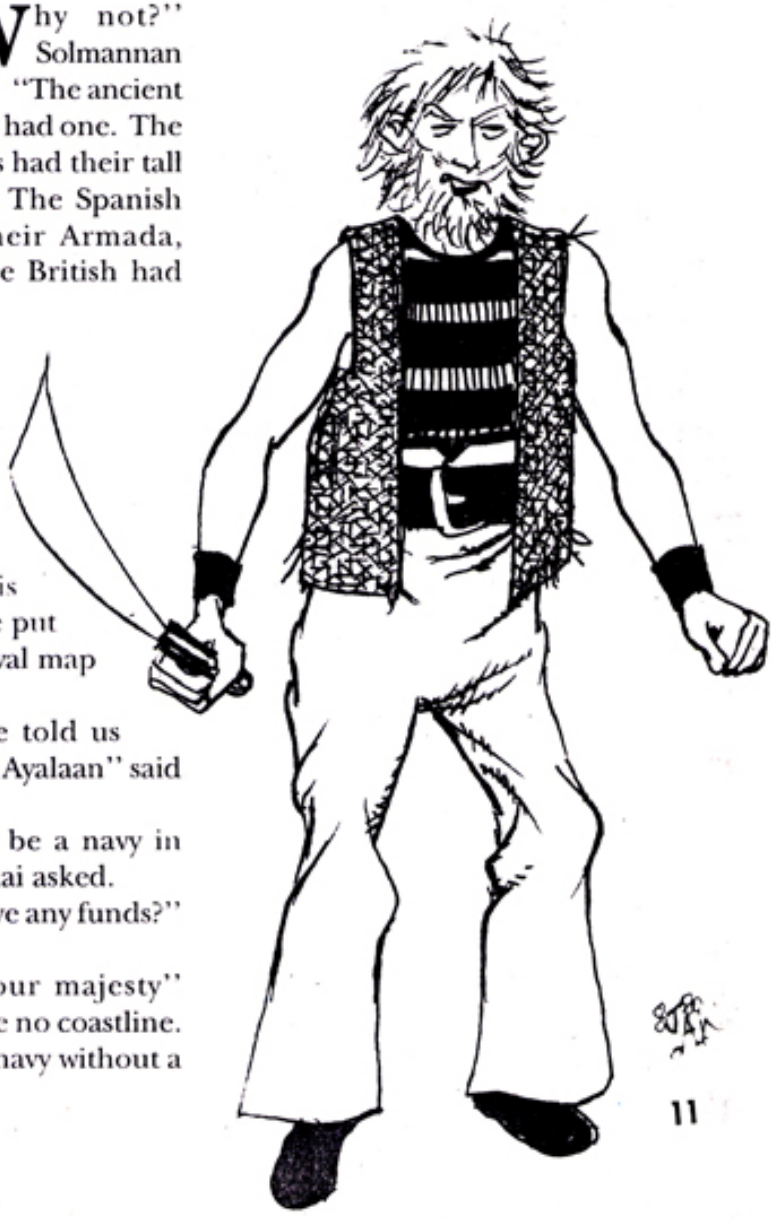
"So what?" said Solmannan. "We never asked for a sea. Just a navy."

"You are being very silly" said Ayalaan. "What would the ships sail on if there is no sea?"

"We could sail them on our rivers" said Solmannan.

"What use would that be?" Varisumai asked.

"Well, just to have a navy" said



Sigainasam.

The king looked wistful. "I wish we could have a navy" he said.

"We will have it, your majesty" said Solmannan reassuringly.

"We would never dream of disappointing your majesty" said Sigainasam with an oily smile.

Ayalaan and Varisumai looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders.

"Now, let us start planning for the navy" Sigainasam said briskly, as though to indicate that the matter was resolved.

"First we need some experts to guide us in this" Ganabadi said.

Sigainasam, Solmannan and Ganabadi scratched their heads and tried to think of some naval experts. Varisumai and Ayalaan remained aloof, just watching the proceedings.

After several hours of useless debate, no one could indentify any expert. So the planning session was postponed to the next day.

Ayalaan and Varisumai didn't turn up for the second day's deliberations. But Solmannan came in excitedly.

"I have found a sailor!" he exclaimed. "A master mariner from England."

"Really!" The king was elated. "Bring him here immediately."

"He just came from a neighbouring country, and is without a job. I will bring him here this evening."

The so-called master mariner was just an ordinary sailor who had missed the boat, so to say. While the ship he worked on had anchored at a nearby country, he had come ashore and wandered about so long that the ship had left without him. Since then he had been travelling on foot, living on his wits, and had just reached Jayabalpore.

That evening all the ministers and officials had gathered to see the "master mariner". The man turned out to be a scrawny, blonde Englishman with an untidy beard and an unruly mop of hair.

He bowed low to the king.

"Jack Tar at your service, King" he said.

"You must address the king as 'Your Majesty'" said Sigainasam sternly.

"A thousand pardons" said Jack Tar, bowing and smiling.

"Have you had a lot of experience as a sailor?" Solmannan asked.

"I have sailed the seven seas, and been to every land under the sun."

"Would you know how to orga-

nise a navy?" the king asked.

The sailor had been starving for several days, and was thin and weak. So he was eager for any income coming his way.

"Of course" he said. "Which is the port we have to start from?"

"There is no port, and no sea" Ayalaan snapped. "Just a couple of rivers."

The sailor was silent for awhile. And then said : "That will be rather difficult."

"You will be paid well" the king said, and immediately Jack Tar brightened up. He was not going to give up such a chance. He would have agreed to start a navy even in the Sahara.

"Of course, it can be done" he said, grinning broadly. He was asked to report there the next day.

After he had left, Ayalaan turned to the king. "He is no master mariner" he said. "He is just a swab."

"What's a swab?" the king asked.

"The lowest level of seaman" Ayalaan said. "Moreover, he hasn't even told us his real name. Jack Tar is just a colloquial expression for sailor."

"Anyway, he is the only sailor we have got" said Sigainasam.

"We must have a navy, and this Tar is the only man who can help us in this" said Solmannan.

The next day Jack Tar arrived with a broad knife he had picked up in an ironmonger's shop. He had tucked it in his belt, and called it his cutlass.

"What is a cutlass?" the king asked.

"It is a sword used by sailors" said Ayalaan. "But this cutlass would never have been near the sea."

It was decided that the king, accompanied by his ministers and Jack Tar would go to Jayabalaaru, the biggest river in the country. They had to travel forty miles to reach the river, which they did with great fanfare. Fifty coaches and a hundred horsemen made the trip with a brass band blaring martial music.

When they reached the bank of the river, they were surprised to find many people casually walking across the river. There was only a trickle of water, not more than two feet deep.

A neighbouring country through which the river passed before reaching Jayabalpore, had built a dam and blocked the water.

Jack Tar still has no job, and Jayabalpore has no navy.

JANAKAN

BALLOONS

I have seven balloons.
When the balloons go up in the sky,
A riot of colours, how pretty they fly!

The red one is nice,
A yellow one will do,
Green is the best of all.
They float close to the tree tops
Higher and higher in the air,
Thank god, they didn't go 'pop',
And if they did go 'pop',
It would make me sob.

K. Dhivya, age 6, PSBB, Chennai.

What is a `white elephant'?

White is an achromatic colour. It is a mixture of seven colours. It represents everything that is pure, clean, holy and wholesome. It adds several shades of meanings to the ordinary words we use everyday.

'White Admiral' is a beautiful Eurasian butterfly that has brown wings with white marks. Some mineral salts such as sodium sulphate and sodium chloride which occur as white deposits in certain alkaline soils are named 'white alkali'.

The ever-industrious termites are the 'white ants'. A 'white bait' is a small edible fish. Sorbus Aria is a tree with leaves whose name is 'white beam'. 'White caps' at beach, are the waves crowned with crests of foam. 'White cloud' represents small, brightly coloured fish, native to China.

* White-collar jobs are much sought after.

* Electrical appliances were originally made with a white exterior.

When the ordinary water becomes a source of power it is known as 'white coal'. A 'white-collar-job' is what every youth seeks. He would rather remain unemployed than seek self-employment! Coal mines contain 'white damp' - the poisonous carbon monoxide.

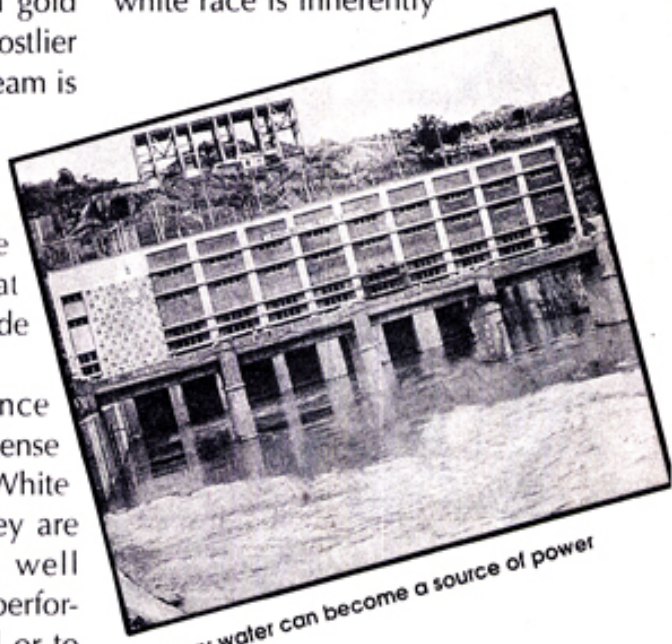
When an evil person pretends to be a do-gooder, he is known as a 'white sepulchure'. A 'white elephant' is something that is large, unproductive and expensive to maintain. Hence, the best and

the most friendly way to ruin a person is to present him with a white elephant. Clowns are 'white faced'. 'White feather' symbolises cowardice and a 'white flag', a complete and unconditional surrender.

'White gold' is an alloy of gold and nickel that resembles the costlier platinum. Every woman's dream is to fill her house with 'white goods' - electrical appliances like fridge, washing machine, mixie and cooking range. The name is due to the fact that originally all these were made only with a white exterior.

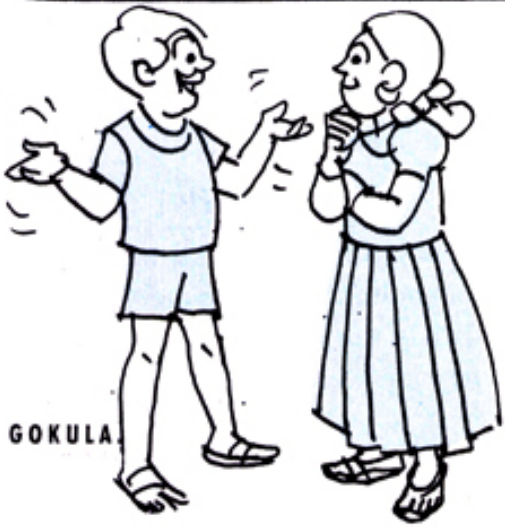
Teenagers often experience 'white heat' due to a state of intense emotions and excitement. 'White lies' make life livable, as they are diplomatic, harmless and well intended. 'White magic' is performed to protect one from evil or to do good deeds. 'White plague' and 'white death' both refer to the tuberculosis of the lungs.

Blue sapphires are used as gem stones. 'White sapphire' is the purest form of corundum. When beautiful girls are kidnapped and forced into prostitution, they become 'white slaves'. The man who procures such slaves is called a 'white slaver'. Even today many people believe in 'white supremacy'. This theory says that white race is inherently superior to the other races and are hence entitled to rule over the other races.



• Ordinary water can become a source of power

Visalakshi Ramani,
Coimbatore.



Q : What is black, white and very difficult?

A : An exam paper.

Q : What musical instruments do you carry with you?

A : Your eardrums.

Nagbhushan, N.,
Bangalore.

SNIPPETS

Vampire society

The world's oldest active vampire society is "Count Dracula Fan Club", in New York, US. The society was founded in 1964 by Ms. Jeanne Keyes Youngson.

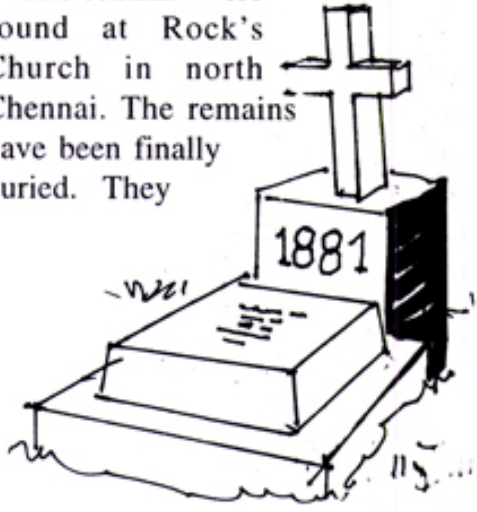
Longest play

Vidhata Kalavidaru, a Bangalore-based drama troupe, set a new world record by staging "Saarathya" (Charioteer), a 51 hour and seven minute play. The play which began on Aug 15, 1999 ended on Aug. 17, 1999.

Buried at last!

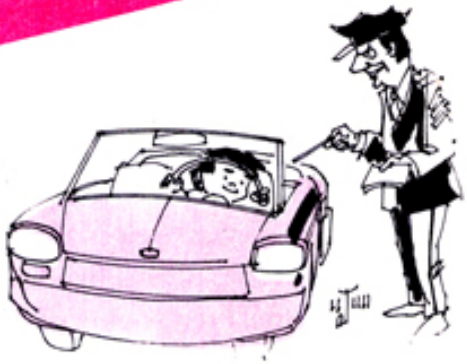
The skeletal remains of a catholic parish priest have remained intact, 117 years after his death.

The remains were found at Rock's Church in north Chennai. The remains have been finally buried. They were found while digging earth to build a monument for the priest. The find evoked awe and wonder among the predominantly catholic population in north Chennai.



'Fine' girls

According to official records in Stockholm, a 10-year-old Swedish girl has run up 286 parking fines. They are worth more than $44,000



over the past nine months. That is almost a ticket a day.

The parking authority list of offenders also includes a five-year-old girl with 15 parking fines amounting to $2,600. A three-year-old girl was slapped with five fines. Spokesman Tapio Tuomainen said that the young offenders were being used by parents.

Century-old bicycle

A century-old bicycle was auctioned for a record £105,750! The auction, held in London shattered the estimate of £1300. It eclipsed the previous record of £46,000 set in 1998,

paid for an 1880's three-wheeler. The bicycle was made in England in 1891. The buyer was from West Asia.

Longest painting

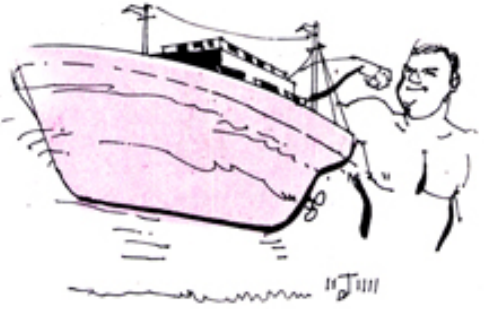
Sarat Kumar Chatterjee has created the world's longest painting. His record-breaking scroll painting was displayed at Netaji Indoor stadium in Calcutta. It has been listed in the Guinness.

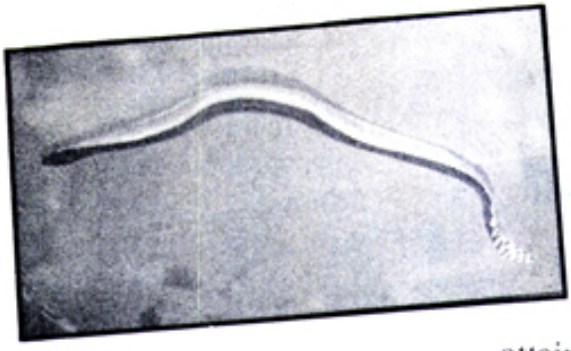
World's strongest man

A 51-year-old American, John Wooten, has been billed as the world's strongest man. Mr. Wooten moved a 16,000 tonne ship approximately 21 metres. He moved the vessel for about 40 minutes.

Mr. Wooten had already pulled a Boeing 747 jet and a 280 tonne train earlier.

Suresh K. Anjum, Calcutta.





* Black and yellow sea snake.

KILLER SNAKES OF

Sea snakes or marine reptiles, are deadlier than the venomous cobras and kraits, their kith on land. The adaptations acquired by these snakes for existence in the sea are perfect, total and complete. Their nostrils are situated on the top of the head to facilitate their breathing. The paddle - shaped tail, the most striking feature of sea snakes, aids in providing the propulsive thrust while swimming.

The large belly scales used for crawling on land are absent, barring a few species that come ashore to lay eggs. A vast majority of the sea snakes give birth to live young.

Sea snakes are mistaken for eels sometimes. However, the dry scaly covering and the absence of fins and a gill pouch which are characteristic of an eel, will easily establish the identity of a sea snake. Sea snakes feed principally on fish. The largest sea snake attains a maximum of three metres in length.

Sea snake venom is estimated to be 10 to 20 times as potent as that of the cobra. Despite this, the sea snakes are timid. They bite only under extreme provocation. However, sea snakes pose a threat to the fisherfolk. They are likely to be bitten when they wade barefoot on the muddy shores or when they sort out their catches with bare hands.

All sea snakes are dangerous without exception. The divers approach them cautiously. The sea snake meat is much relished in most of SE Asia.

SEA SNAKES OFF CHENNAI COAST

The Beaked sea snake, whose snout extends beyond the lower

jaw is commonly found off Chennai coast. It grows up to nearly 90 cms. It is very aggressive. The Yellow Sea snake, considered to be the largest of all sea snakes, is yellow in colour, with black rings around the body. The Chittul or annulated sea snake is another common species frequently a part of the fisherman's catch. It is either greenish-white or bluish-grey

THE SEA

with conspicuous black bars.

The graceful narrow-headed sea snake is rather unusual because its shape is in tune with its specialised diet which comprises burrowing eels, fish found in holes, and their eggs. It is a dark-olive snake, with dull white to greenish crossbands or paired white spots on the back. The Black and Yellow sea snakes are more widely distributed. They are seen miles away from the shore.

As the name indicates, it is black above and yellow below, with yellow stripes inbetween.

T.S.N. MURTHY,
Chennai.

IT'S EXAM TIME!

I studied the whole night,
In the dim light.
A set of books,
Yet to be read.
Waiting for me,
Was my bed.
My marks could be the best,
But I failed with the worst!
Because I slept,
Through the test.

Shruti Havaldar, age 11,
DPS Delhi.

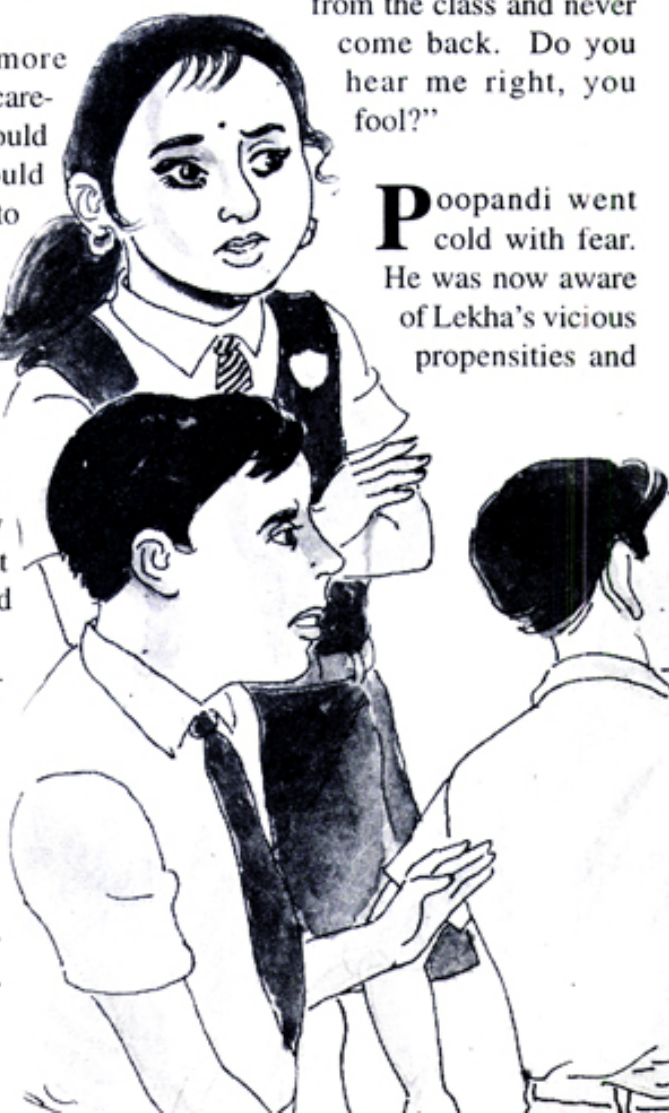
THE Village BOY

Poopandi did not attend school the whole of next week. Lekha returned to her 'lost' seat. She heaved a sigh of relief — after all she had cleverly driven the country bumpkin out of the school!

To her chagrin, Poopandi reappeared after a week with the same shabby look and the same broken English. Poopandi was restored to his rightful seat and Lekha was pushed back to the second row.

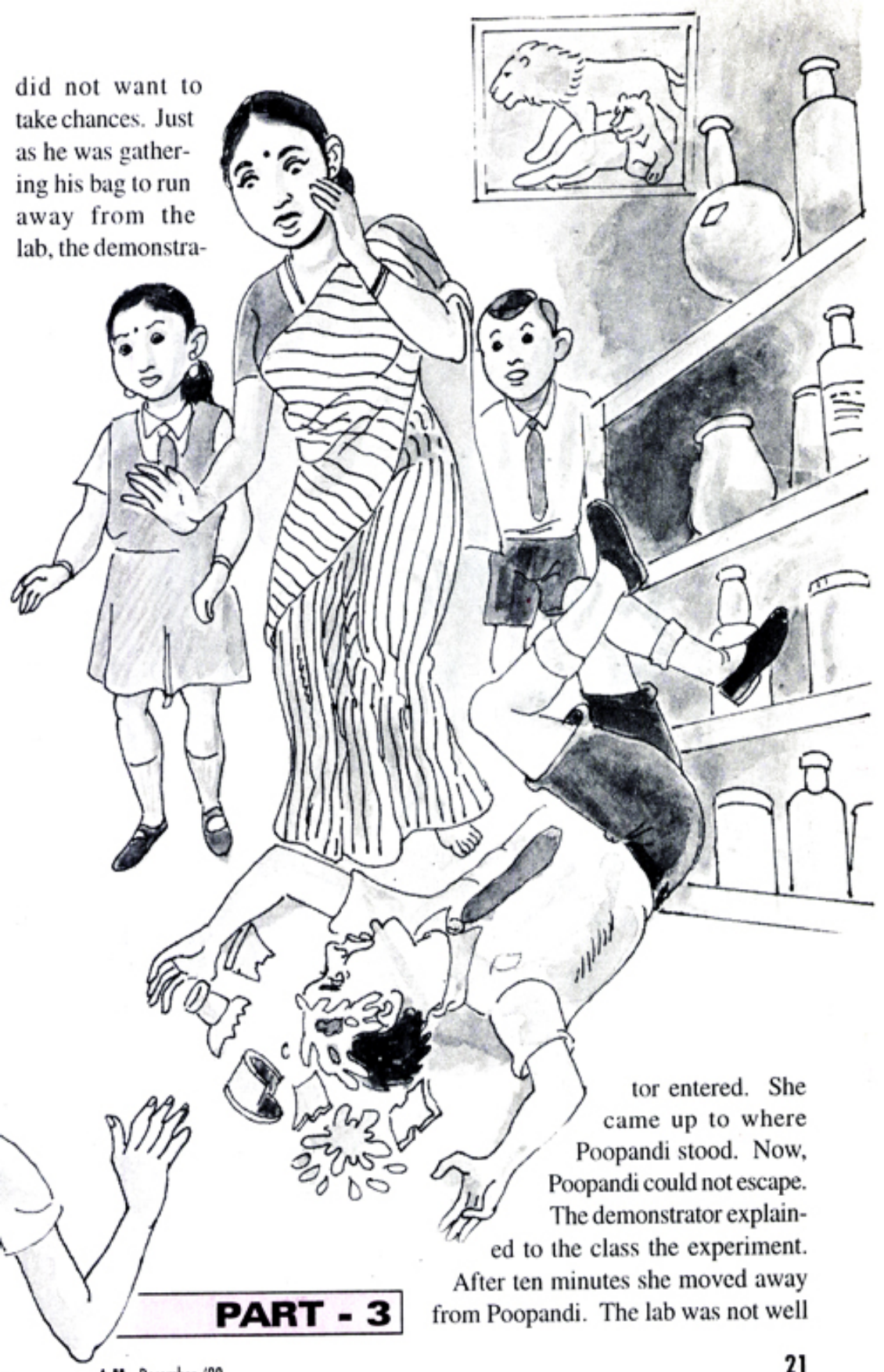
Lekha became even more furious now. She had to plot carefully this time. The act should be such that Poopandi would never even dream of coming to school. Lekha was popular among her classmates, partly because of her father's influential post with the government. Many students were eager to help Lekha. Lekha chose the class bully, Ajit. They jointly hatched a plan to throw out Poopandi from their class and the school.

The last period of the forenoon session that day was chemistry practicals. The entire class of std. IX A was in the chemistry laboratory. The class waited for the lab demonstrator. Lekha stood beside Poopandi and said ominously, "you idiot, today is your last day in this school. You will never forget this day for the rest of your life. If you want to save yourself, just run away from the class and never come back. Do you hear me right, you fool?"



Poopandi went cold with fear. He was now aware of Lekha's vicious propensities and

did not want to take chances. Just as he was gathering his bag to run away from the lab, the demonstrator entered. She came up to where Poopandi stood. Now, Poopandi could not escape. The demonstrator explained to the class the experiment. After ten minutes she moved away from Poopandi. The lab was not well



PART - 3

lit. Poopandi was trying to concentrate on the experiment. As he bent to take a chemical, a long stick appeared from nowhere and went straight to the cupboard over Poopandi's head. Distracted, Poopandi turned his head and... was it Lekha nudging Ajit who was holding that stick? The next moment the stick had gently knocked an open bottle off the cupboard.

The bottle fell on Poopandi's head and his shout, "Aiyoo," echoed throughout the building. When the demonstrator rushed to the scene, Poopandi was rolling on the floor, writhing in pain. The demonstrator rubbed Poopandi's head. A lock of his hair came apart. Only then did she realise that somebody had spilled concentrated acid on Poopandi's head. In the melee that followed Lekha did not know when and how Poopandi was taken to the hospital.

In the afternoon Lekha learned that some government officials had come to investigate into the matter. She was terrified. During the science period a peon brought the message that the HM wanted to see Lekha immediately.

So, Poopandi had spoken. Lekha wondered if she would be punished. Her father was with the HM when she

entered the HM's office. She was petrified. The headmistress merely nodded to Lekha and quietly walked out of the room. Lekha had never seen her father appear so tense. He asked her somberly, "Lekha, somebody spilled acid on the head of your classmate, Poopandi. He is still unconscious. It is a pretty serious matter. Do you know who did it?"

Lekha was relieved. So, they hadn't found the culprit. She wanted to change the topic, and she did it very adroitly.

"Dad, should a person of your rank, an IAS officer, worry over such a small matter?"

"Lekha, do you know who Poopandi is? He is the only son of our education minister, who is more than my boss. The minister is terribly angry and has deputed me personally to look into the matter."

Lekha had not expected this. It took her time to gather her wits about her.

"But dad, there must be some mistake. Poopandi said that his father was a businessman."

"No Lekha, the minister wanted the truth concealed. The Chief Minister called Poopandi's father all of a sudden and made him the Minister for Education. So, Poopandi had to change his school. The minister wished that his son should have a normal school life. Poopandi had no say in the matter. Only your HM and I know the truth."

To continue,

R. Shreedharon, Madurai.

Here are seven famous characters from Shakespeare's plays. Can you spot them?

Clues : 1. Juliet, 2. Macbeth, 3. Olivia, 4. Orsino, 5. Portia, 6. Romeo, 7. Shylock

O	M	N	O	L	I	V	I	A	S	T
K	R	T	J	U	L	I	E	T	G	R
Y	Z	S	H	T	E	B	C	A	M	D
R	S	L	I	C	A	K	S	T	Y	J
O	W	K	M	N	T	I	M	S	F	V
M	I	G	J	Q	O	G	T	N	O	E
E	B	H	O	R	S	H	X	R	S	P
O	S	H	Y	L	O	C	K	L	O	U
U	V	W	O	M	N	O	P	T	N	P

S. Charanya, Std. X,
Little Holy Angel's Mat. Hr.
Sec. School, Korattur.

O	M	N	O	L	I	V	I	A	S	T
K	R	T	J	U	L	I	E	T	G	R
Y	Z	S	H	T	E	B	C	A	M	D
R	S	L	I	C	A	K	S	T	Y	J
O	W	K	M	N	T	I	M	S	F	V
M	I	G	J	Q	O	G	T	N	O	E
E	B	H	O	R	S	H	X	R	S	P
O	S	H	Y	L	O	C	K	L	O	U
U	V	W	O	M	N	O	P	T	N	P

Nanny's Christmas Present

Nanny was an orphan. Her parents had died when she was just a year old. Nanny was brought up by her grandparents. Nanny's grandparents were too poor to send her to school. They looked after Nanny very well, indeed.

Nanny's grandfather was a postman. He was out of the house most of the time. He did not earn much and could deliver letters to only ten houses a day.

Soon, however, grandfather's health failed and he died. Nanny's grandma looked after her for sometime. When grandma realised that she too would leave the world, she arranged for Nanny to live in an orphanage.

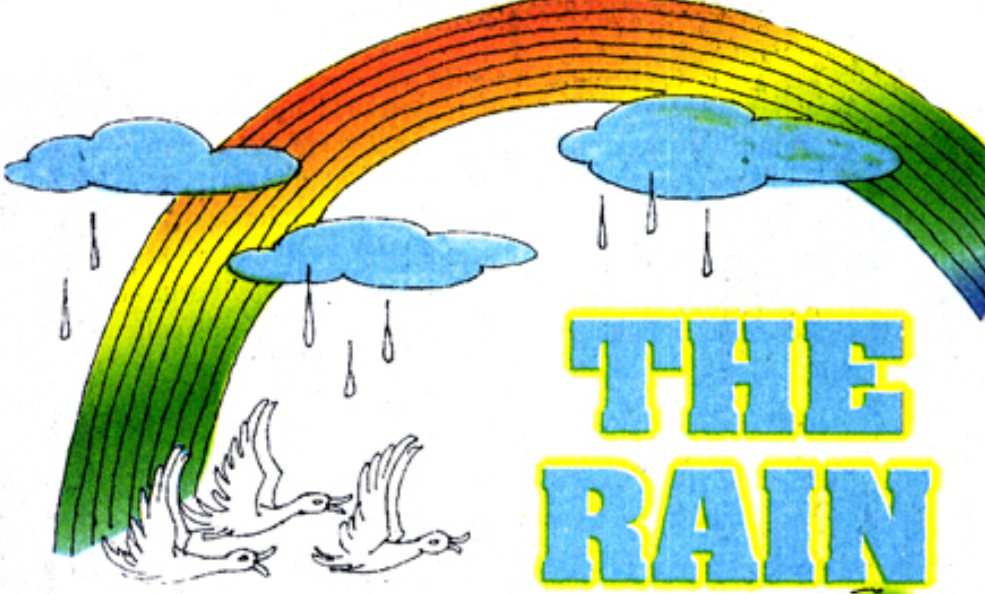
Before Nanny could leave for the orphanage, her grandmother died. Nanny had no uncles or aunts whom she could call her own.

It was christmas eve. Nanny had seen Santa Claus in her village. As she lay in her bed she prayed that Santa Claus should take her with him to his house.

Nanny was awakened at the middle of the night by noises. She sat up. To her surprise she saw Santa Claus seated next to her. Nanny was pleased. Santa Claus picked her up and called out to the dogs pulling the sledge. The cold wind blew across her face as Nanny watched the scenery. Santa Claus had heard her prayers. He was taking her to his home! She was the luckiest of all children.

Smruti Gurjar, Std. VI,
Pearl Valley Vidya Niketan,
Bangalore.

POEM



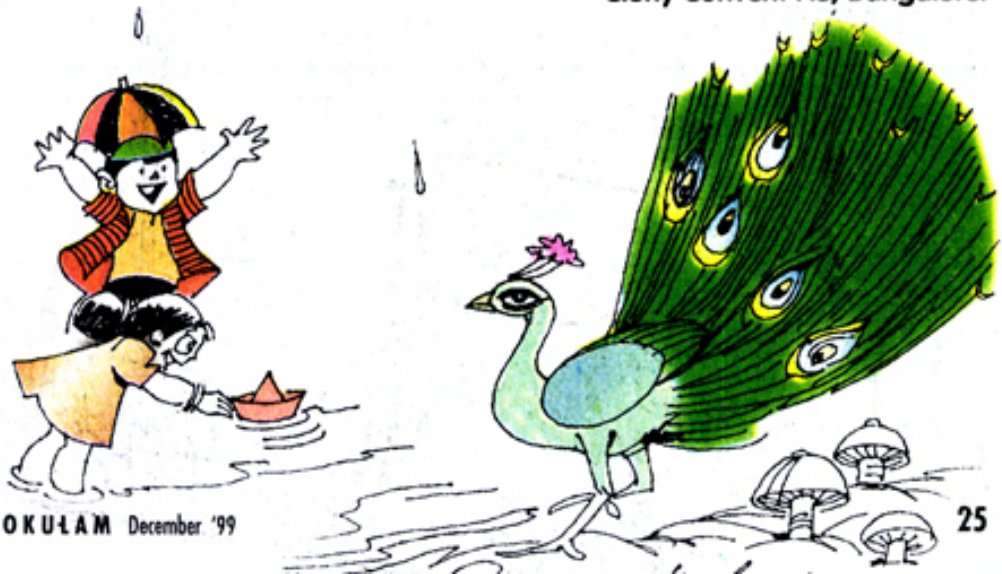
THE RAIN

Drip drop falls the rain,
Wetting the window-pane,
The wind whistles like a train,
The clouds gather black and plain.

The thunder claps yet again,
Scaring children on the lane,
The rainbow forms a colourful chain,
While birds sing a new refrain.

The peacock dances to a strain,
Green is every grass and grain,
Rain spells the end of pain,
That's why we wish for it again and again.

T. Raksha, VI C,
Cluny Convent HS, Bangalore.



Why are

About 5,000 species of algae are estimated to occur in the inland water bodies and coastal waters of India. They have great potential economic use. Scientists and researchers have not been able to identify many algae though work on Indian algae has been on for sometime now.

According to recent estimates, about 2,000 species of algae have been studied. Most of these are freshwater and coastal algal forms. Little is known of the deepwater and coastline algae found attached to reeds, coral stones, large boulders, shells and marine plants and animals.

A project on the algal flora of India has recently been launched at the Centre for Advanced Study in Botany, Madras University. The projects on algal studies initiated by some Indian universities and national laboratories under CSIR and ICAR are looking into possible new economic uses for our algal wealth.

In India we have two pockets of marine algal wealth in the inter-tidal zone along our coasts. They are the west coast near Okhla and Dwaraka in Gujarat and the east coast near Mandapam and Pamban in Tamil Nadu. Fossil algae of various groups have also been recorded in India. The most economically important seaweeds (which are a type of algae) are Sargassum. Gelidium, Gelidiella, Gracilaria and Gigartina. Now, the seaweeds collected from the east and west coasts are meeting the growing demands of seaweed-based industries in India.

They are used for deriving agar-agar, agarose and sodium alginate. The seaweed wealth is depleting. The search for deep-water algae has gained momentum. The Marine Algal Research Station, Mandapam and the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, are trying to augment seaweed resources by maricultural techniques in coastal waters.

Recent findings indicate that some seaweeds might be utilised for the production of biogas and as biofertilisers.

Commercial use of algae should not be over exploited. Adequate conserva-

DOLLS OF FLOUR

You need :

Wheat flour - one cup,

Fabric paints - three or four colours and a brush;

Some hot water to prepare a dough out of the wheat flour.

Method :

Make a dough (as made for chapatis) of the wheat flour. Make miniature pots and pans like those found in the kitchen. Set aside to dry.

tion measures are necessary. Most of the algae inhabiting the aquatic environment are unaffected by climatic and seasonal changes. The inherent capacity of several algal strains to utilise heavy metals and pollutants helps them to withstand high levels of pollution in water bodies.

They can overcome unfavourable conditions such as aridity. They reproduce vegetatively which helps them tide over difficult situations.

Some of the species have been lost due to excessive human exploitation and interference. Natural calamites such as earthquake and volcanic eruptions too kill algae. Indigenous species of algae with a small population are more threatened. Frequent oil spills in the oceans and intense human activities also results in the death of algal wealth.

Fall in algal growth will disturb the food chain. Coral rocks will be lost. Large scale exploitation of coral rocks from the seabeds will destroy the natural habitats of many coralline algae. The species may become extinct.

Many marine macroscopic forms are exposed to tropical heat during March - May. Global warming and increasing fuel consumption also affects the algal population. To date, a complete list of threatened algae in India has not been prepared.

algae important?

The survey on freshwater algae is not complete. No algal species are covered under the Protected Area Network. Some coastal zones have been declared marine parks. Human interference should be fully curbed in these zones.

We must develop a national herbarium for algal species. Rare and threatened algae should be artificially produced. By remote sensing techniques more coralline algae should be explored. More marine national parks will mean more protection to algae.

Velayudhan Features

CREATIVE CORNER

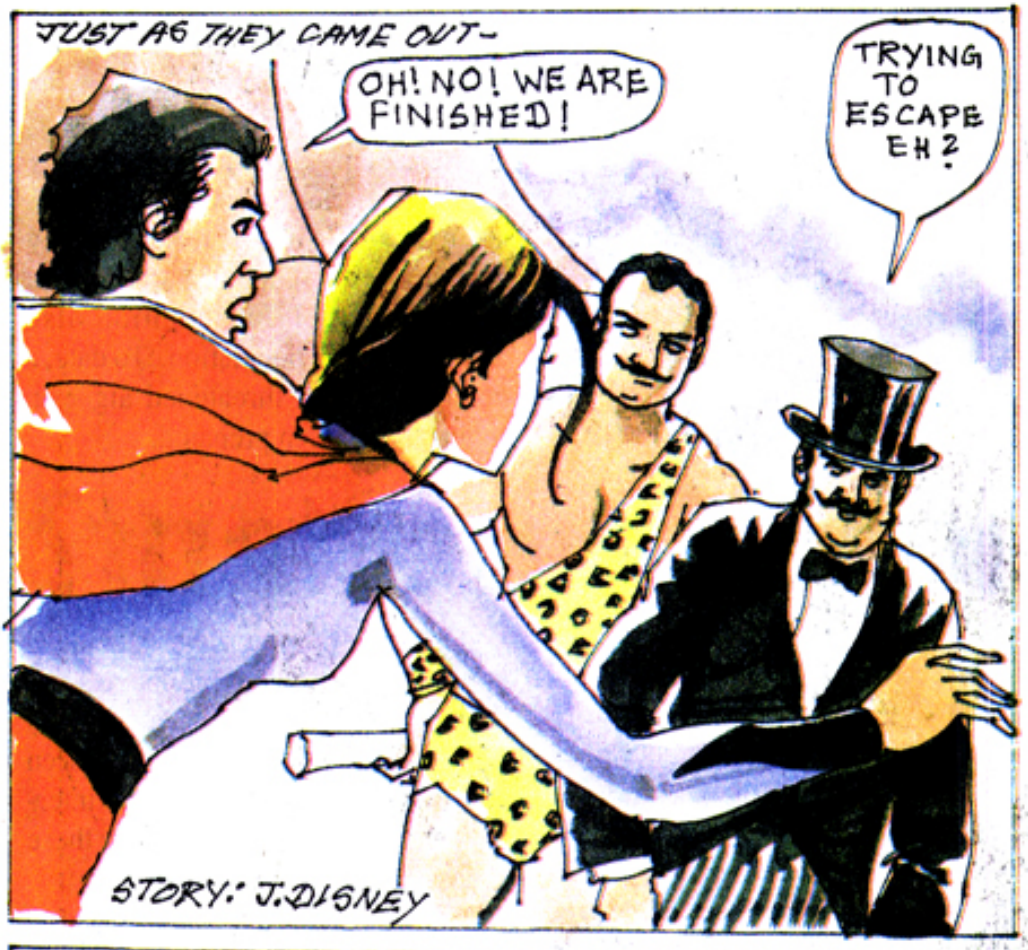
Make dolls as shown in Fig 2. Leave them to dry for two days.

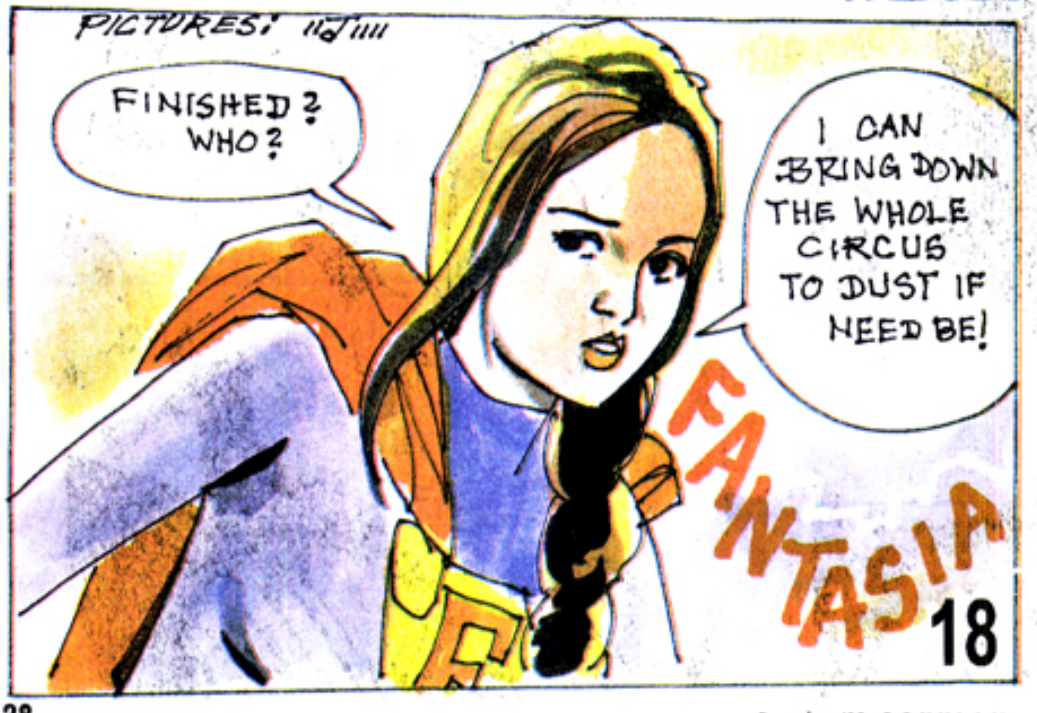
After the dolls and utensils have dried you can paint them. Draw eyes, nose and lips for your doll.

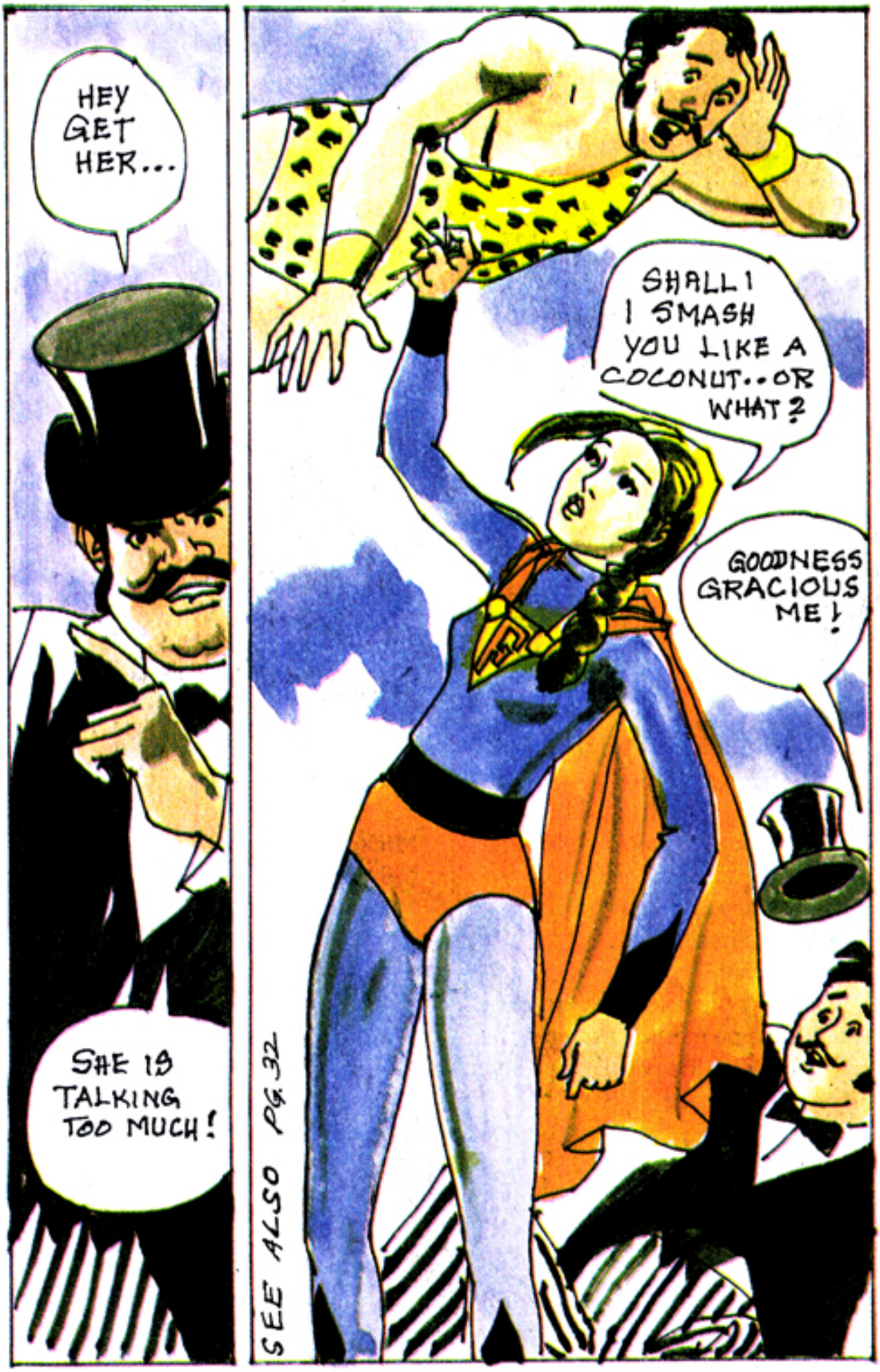
The dolls will be ready for you to play with the following day.

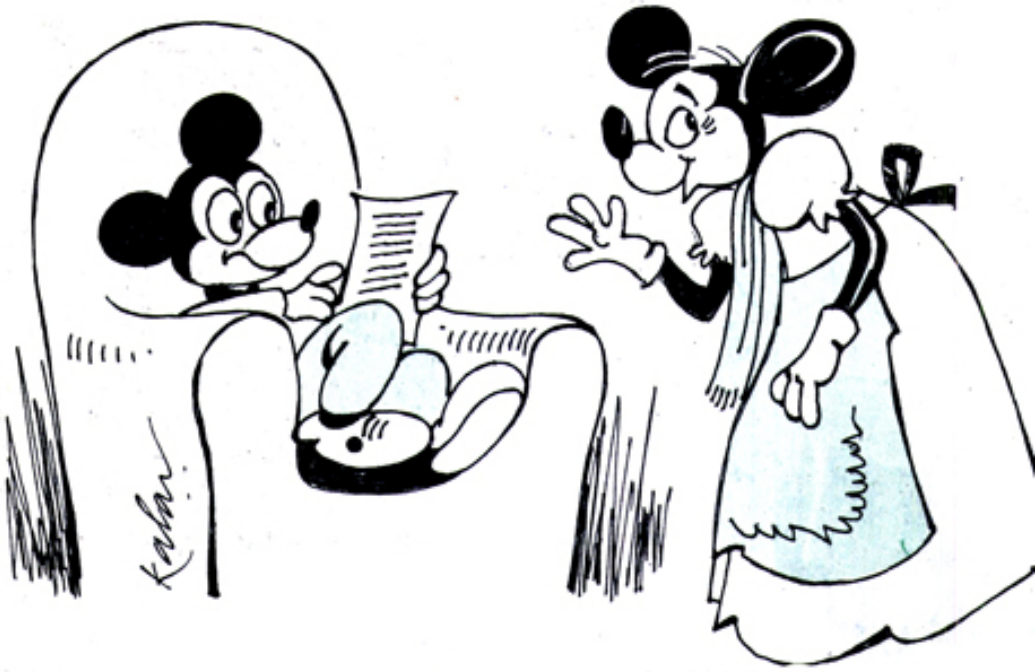
Sreya, Hyderabad.

Dear Sreya, pl. send in your house address and the name of your school.


JUST AS THEY CAME OUT-
OH! NO! WE ARE FINISHED!
TRYING TO ESCAPE EH?
STORY: J. DISNEY


PICTURES: ILLI
FINISHED? WHO?
I CAN BRING DOWN THE WHOLE CIRCUS TO DUST IF NEED BE!
FANTASIA
18


HEY GET HER...
SHE IS TALKING TOO MUCH!
SHALL I I SMASH YOU LIKE A COCONUT..OR WHAT?
GOODNESS GRACIOUS ME!
SEE ALSO PG. 32



MICKEY AND MINNIE IN - THE BIG CATCH

Mickey is from a very rich family while his girl friend Minnie is from a poor family.

Mickey : Mom, there's an invitation for me.

Mickey's mom : Read the invitation. Let's hear.

Mickey : Oh! It is Minnie's invitation. Today is her birthday and she invites me for this occasion.

Mom : Okay. You may go.

Mickey : Mom... but... but

Mom : What?

Mickey : I want to buy a present for her and some marbles and balloons to play with after the party.

Mom : Okay, take this money.

Mickey : Can I also buy a strong rope to play 'tug of war' with Minnie?

Mom : Okay. On your way back, buy some tomatoes for me, will you?

Mickey : Sure!

On his way to Minnie's house, Mickey buys some tomatoes, marbles, balloons, a rope and a gift for Minnie.

Minnie is at the door to receive him.

Minnie : Welcome to my house my dear Mickey.

Mickey : Ah! Hello!

Minnie : Come in.

Mickey : Happy birthday. This is for you.

He hands her the gift he bought for her.

Minnie : Thank you.

Minnie opens the box to find a

beautiful chain. She wears it. Just then a robber appears and snatches the chain away and runs.

Mickey : I'll be right back in a minute, Minnie.

Mickey throws the marbles in front of the thief who skids on them and falls. Mickey catches the robber and beats him up. He returns to Minnie's house with the chain and the robber.

Minnie is pleased that Mickey has caught the robber. She phones the police.

Mickey : Let us have more fun here.

Mickey takes out the things he bought, from his bag.

He ties the robber to the pillar with a rope. He bursts the balloons with Minnie on the robber's head. Finally, both of them smash the tomatoes on the robber's face. The police arrive and thank Mickey.

Mickey and Minnie have a wonderful day.

Nisha Kukken, Std. VI,
Cluny Convent H.S., Bangalore.

BUDDING CHEF

PANCAKE

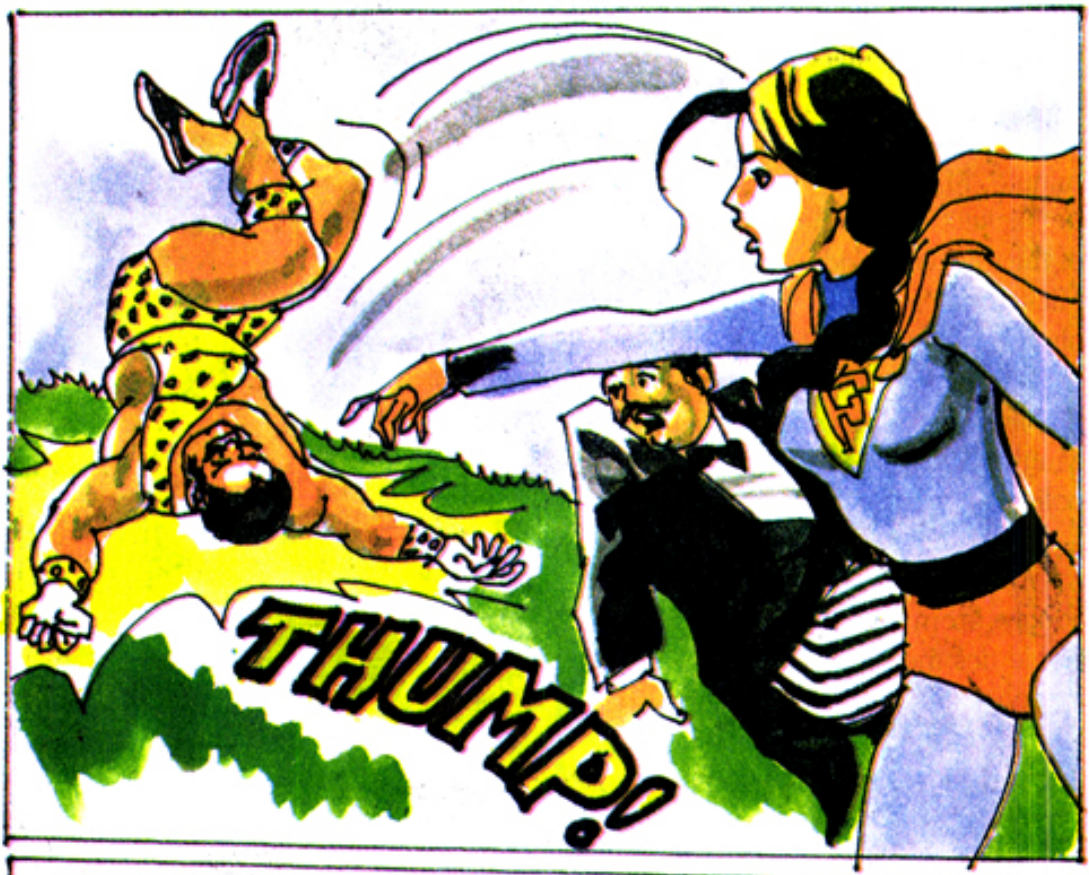
You need :

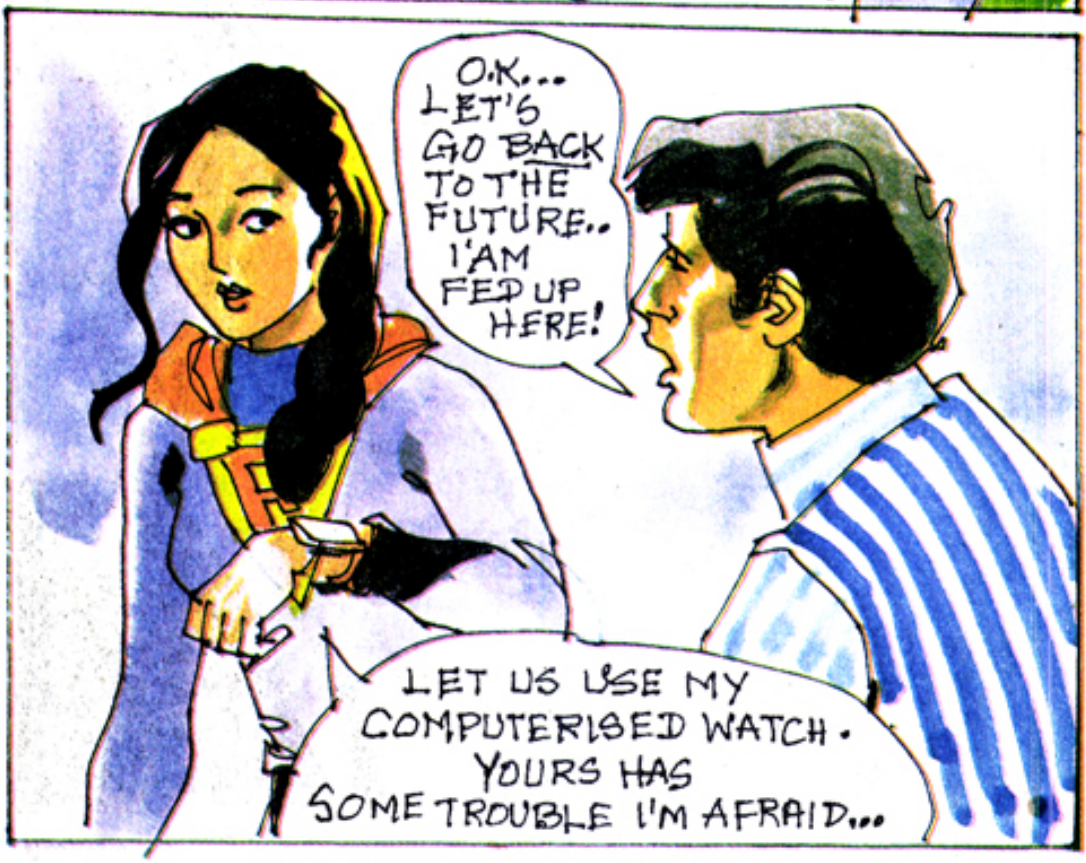
Coconut - 1
Maida - ½ kg.
Sugar - 200 gms

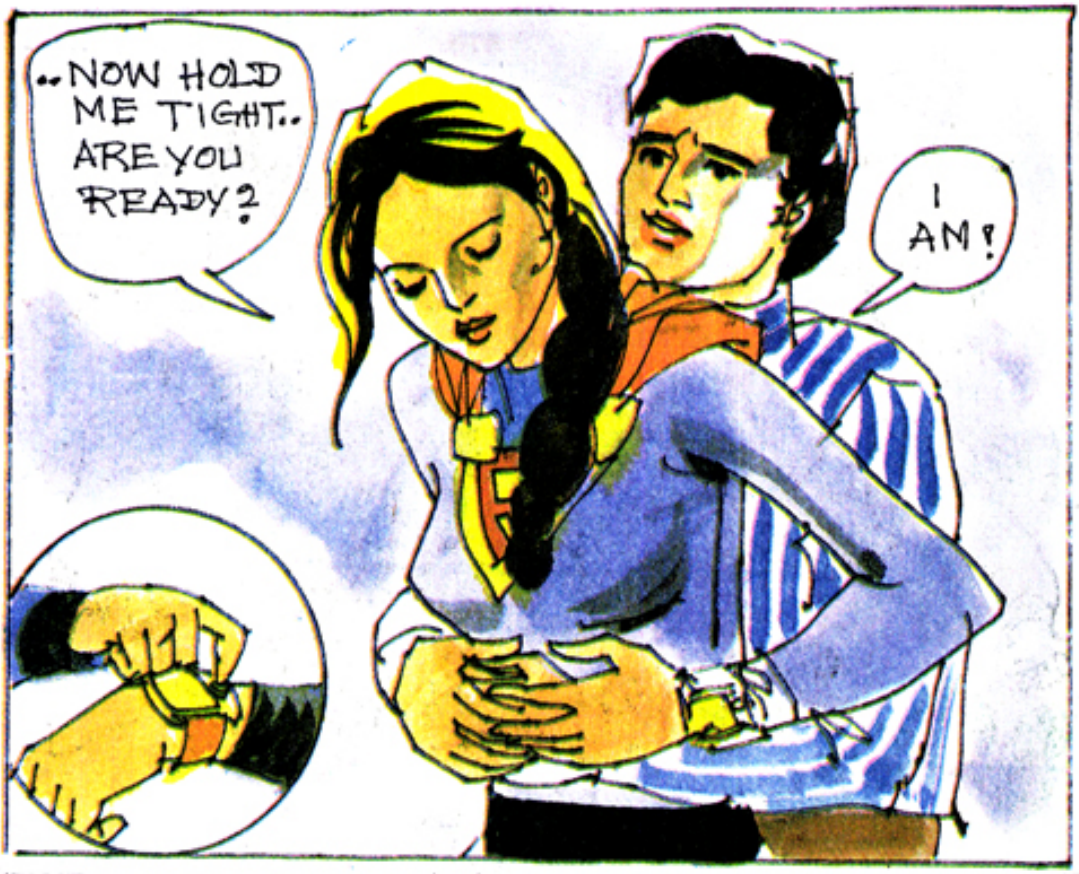
Method :

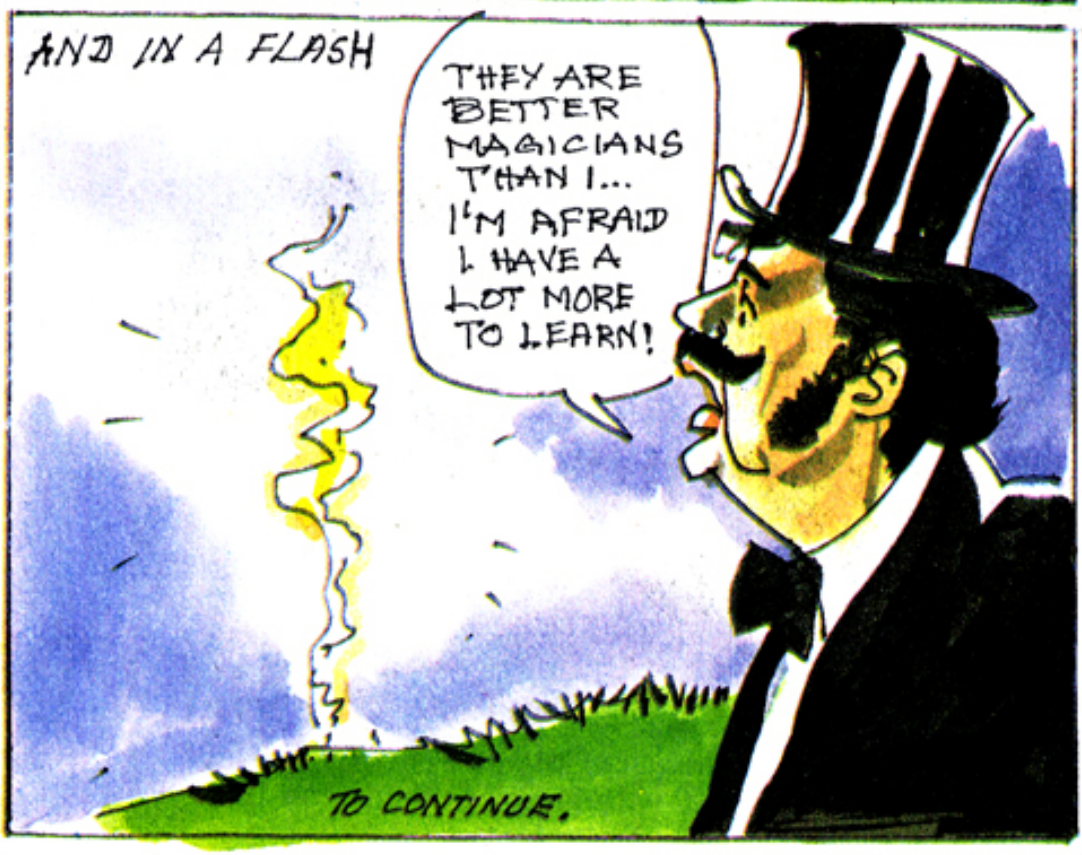
Scrap the coconut finely. Roast it for three minutes in a pan and add sugar to it. Set aside. Add some water and a pinch of salt to the maida and make a paste. Prepare the dosas. Sprinkle the roasted coconut and sugar on each dosa and serve hot.

Priyadharshini Vellandurai,
Std. VIII C,
Mahatma Gandhi Centenary
Vidhyalaya, Trichy.


THUMP!


O.K... LET'S GO BACK TO THE FUTURE.. I'AM FED UP HERE!
LET US USE MY COMPUTERISED WATCH. YOURS HAS SOME TROUBLE I'M AFRAID...


..NOW HOLD ME TIGHT.. ARE YOU READY?
I AM!


AND IN A FLASH
THEY ARE BETTER MAGICIANS THAN I... I'M AFRAID I HAVE A LOT MORE TO LEARN!
TO CONTINUE.

PUZZLE PAGES

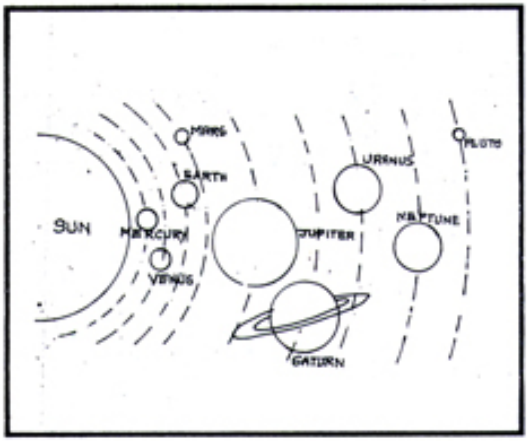
Do you know them?

1. Largest continent. 2. Largest country. 3. Largest delta. 4. Largest ocean. 5. Largest planet. 6. Largest religion. 7. Largest island. 8. Largest desert. 9. Largest gulf. 10. Largest bay.

V. Latha, Std. X,
B.E.L. High School, Bangalore.

QUIZ TIME

1. What are Teasels used for?



2. Where would you find a bread fruit tree? What is the height of the tree?

3. When and where was the first zoo formed?

4. Where can you find Baobad tree?

5. Which are the hottest and coldest places in the solar system? Why? What are their temperatures?

B. Shreekkanth, age 16,
Sir. M. Venkatasubba Rao, School,
Chennai.

TEST YOUR G.K.

1. In which country was the Olympic games started and when?

2. When did the invasion of Alexander start?

3. When was the 1st war of Independence fought?

4. Which travels faster - light or sound?

5. Why does a substance thrown up come to the ground?

6. What are the capitals of Moldavia and Turkey?

7. Where can the 'Great Indian Bustard' be found?

8. What are the currencies of Denmark and Ceylon?

M. Ravikanth, age 14,
Model Mission High School,
Secunderabad.

R — QUIZ

Here are some words beginning with the letter R. Spot them.

1. R — — — (city of seven hills)
2. R — — — (England's national flower)
3. R — — — — — — — — — — (India's present star cricketer)
4. R — — — — — — — (discovered x-ray)
5. R — — — — (A bird)
6. R — — — — — (A communist country)
7. R — — — — — — (A disease caused by deficiency of vitamin D.)
8. R — — — — — — — — (An American president)
9. R — — — — — — — — — — — — (First Indian to land in space)
10. R — — — — — — — — — — — — (Last prime minister from the Nehru family)

S. Sowmya, age 15, and J. Vandana, age 11,
St. Mary's MHSS, Cuddalore.

Dear Sowmya and Vandana, pl. send your house address.

Locate the names of 10 cricket players of different teams.

A	O	P	A	M	Y	O	U	N	G
P	K	Z	L	A	T	Z	K	L	N
M	A	R	L	S	A	N	A	T	H
K	Z	J	A	D	E	J	A	T	N
T	I	O	N	M	O	P	R	A	K
Z	S	N	P	M	Y	T	P	K	L
R	L	T	Q	O	D	U	M	B	E
Q	A	Y	S	Y	N	D	A	Z	P
A	M	L	A	R	A	Y	X	T	M
D	P	R	M	Z	P	M	T	Z	I

R. Ranjeeth, VI A, KV, Coimbatore.

Clues : 1. India, 2. Pakistan, 3. Australia, 4. Bangladesh, 5. West Indies, 6. Kenya, 7. Srilanka, 8. New Zealand, 9. South Africa, 10. Zimbabwe

ANSWER PAGE : 42

PUZZLE PAGES

THE IMPIOUS BOY

It was dawn. On the banks of the river Ganges at Hara-ki-Pauri a large number of people had gathered. Some were bathing. Others stood in the river facing east. They were offering prayers to the sun god. They scooped water in their palms and offered it to the skies.

A boy was sitting on the bank and watching the scene. "Why are they praying?" he asked a priest.

"On this auspicious day", explained the priest, "people take dips in the holy river and offer the sacred water to their ancestors."

"What for?" the boy asked. He was curious.

"They are paying their respects to their ancestors."

"Where do their ancestors live?" The boy looked at the old priest with a twinkle in his eyes and a smile on his lips.

The priest looked suspiciously at the boy.

"They live in an unknown, distant place" the priest replied curtly.

"How far is it?"

The priest was annoyed with the boy's persistance. He said after a long pause, "Oh, it's far, far away."

The boy waded into the river and scooped water in his palms. He shut his eyes and prayed. He then turned west and threw the water.

The bathers in the ghat looked at him in amazement.

"What are you doing, boy?"

"I am offering prayers like you."

"But you should face the east."

"We have some fields in the west near Lahore" the boy sighed. "The rain god has been unkind to us this year. The land has remained fallow. I threw this water to quench the thirst of my land."

Everyone laughed at this. "You must be insane, my boy," said a priest. "How can the water offered by you reach your fields?"

"If the water offered by you can reach your ancestors why not mine?" the boy asked.

"How dare you make a mockery of our shastras?" The priests were incensed. There were quite a few bathers who found the boy's question sensible. They wondered why they hadn't thought about it!

The priests were, however, enraged because the boy, they said, was overstepping his limits.

The boy never received a satisfactory answer to his question. He felt that respect to ancestors should come from the heart and mere gestures will not do.

Years passed. He was now a young man. The villagers were dismayed that the young man scoffed at idol-worship. He disliked many of the customs followed by various religions. He often said, "God is not in temples or mosques. He is in our hearts."

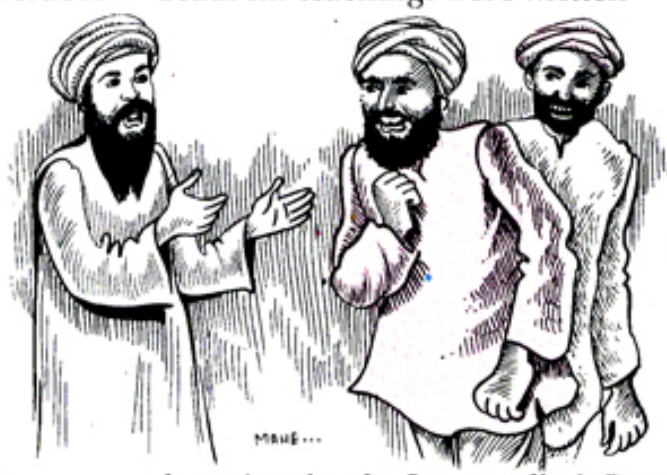
Suspicious neighbours said that he was impious. They chased him out of temples. The muslims called him a kafir. He was not allowed inside mosques..

The young man was pained by the ignorance of the villagers. He travelled all over India. He visited places considered holy by the Hindus and the Muslims. He was convinced that he was right.

On his return, he strove for communal harmony. He was looked upon with suspicion by both communities. He carried on relentlessly.

Over the years Hindus and Muslims became his disciples. He was referred to as 'Guru'. He died in 1539. His death was mourned by both Hindus and Muslims.

He was Gurunanak. After his death his teachings were written down in a book. It was called *Guru Granth Sahib.*



Gurunanak's birth anniversary is still celebrated by his disciples on November 4.

Sukhendu Dutta,
Calcutta.

Grandpa's Gift

School had closed for summer. Chunnu and Munnu were excited. They were done with the grim routine of studies and punishment for some time. They soon found to their dismay that whiling away the long, never-ending afternoons was difficult. They had played every game they knew, read every book they could lay their hands on, quarrelled with every one of their friends, and had been scolded by everyone in the household for getting in their way.

It was on such a depressing day that Chunnu and Munnu suddenly thought of grandpa. He sat in his arm-chair under the mango tree in the garden with the news-paper for company. Grandpa sometimes had interesting ideas for them. So Chunnu and Munnu rushed into the garden and pleaded, "Grandpa, we are bored, tell us what we can do."

Grandpa lifted his eyes from his paper and looked at the two little boys through his bifocals. Then chuckling to himself, he folded and put away his newspaper. "So that is it. What do you want to do now?" he asked finally.

"Shall we play hide and seek in the garden?" squeaked Chunnu.

"Dear me, no," said grandpa, feigning horror, "I guess I am too old for that."

"Let's go for a walk then," said Munnu, for he knew that walking was a passion with grandpa.

Again grandpa vetoed the suggestion. "It's too hot for that, you know. We will get baked in the sun."

Just then a koel cooed from the branches of the mango tree and the sound, for some reason, sent grandpa into a reverie. He almost forgot the two children but came around soon enough. Then he took off his spectacles and wiping them with the corner of his kurta and said in a solemn voice, "Come children sit down before me in the grass. The koel has reminded me of a little incident that I want to tell you about."

The children eagerly did as they were told, for grandpa's tales were often very fascinating.

Soon grandpa began to speak. "The incident occurred when I was a little boy like you, maybe eight or nine years old. It was my birthday. My parents' brothers, and many other relatives and friends had showered various gifts on me. I even received a bicycle that day, I remember, which I rode for many years. But the most

curious gift I got was, from my grandfather. Can you guess what it was?"

Chunnu and Munnu tried several times, but grandpa shook his head in the negative each time. When no further surmises were forthcoming, he said mysteriously, "All right, I shall tell you myself. It was a plant."

"A plant!" cried Chunnu and Munnu incredulously, for they were much disappointed. They had expected something more glamorous.

"Yes a plant," said grandpa emphatically, and then confided, "I was as disappointed with it as you are now. What was a little boy like me to do with so odd a gift? It could not be eaten like a chocolate, nor read like a book, nor could one play with it. It certainly was very drab before all those colourful and costly gifts that my other relatives and friends had given me.

"My grandfather noted my disappointment and taking me aside, talked to me patiently. He said, 'Come, come, take this plant. If you look after it well, it will serve you a lifetime. Go and plant it in the garden with your own hands. I will help you do it.'

"And he took me to the garden where we planted the sapling in a suitable place. My grandfather bade me to tend it till it grew big, and I did that quite diligently.

"Do you know children, that plant is still with me today. Each time I look at it, I think how wise my grandfather had been to give me such a gift. All the other gifts that I got that day are either lost or broken, but not this one. Can you guess where in this garden is the plant that my grandfather gifted me that day?"

When the children could not, grandpa got up from his chair and walked up to the trunk of the mango tree under which they were all sitting. He patted its trunk fondly and said, "This is that plant."

Chunnu and Munnu stared in wonder at the large, well-branched tree that stood before them. Umpteen times had they climbed its branches and feasted on its delicious fruits. They had put up swings on it and played in its shade on countless afternoons. The tree was almost like a much-loved family member. Now that they knew its little story, it became all the more dear to them.

For a while Chunnu and Munnu remained silent. Then Chunnu spoke up haltingly, "Grandpa, on my next birthday you must give me a plant too. I will nurture it like this one."

"I would have a plant for my birthday too," joined Munnu.

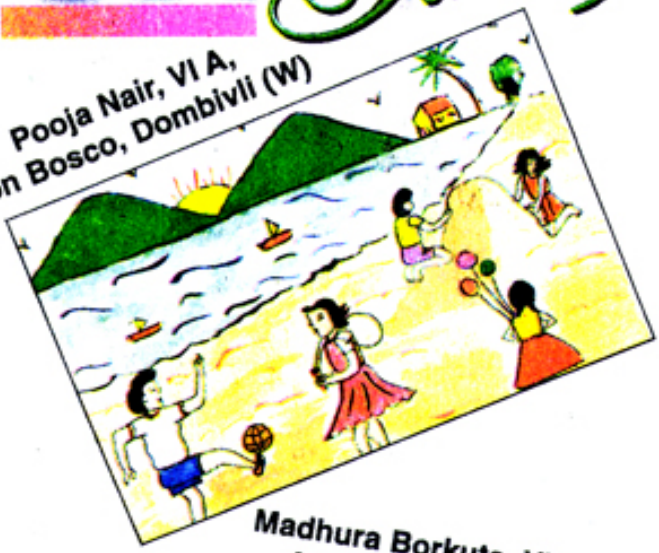
"I will remember," said grandpa, hiding a smile.

L. Balasubramaniam,
Ahmedabad.

GOKULAM art Gallery

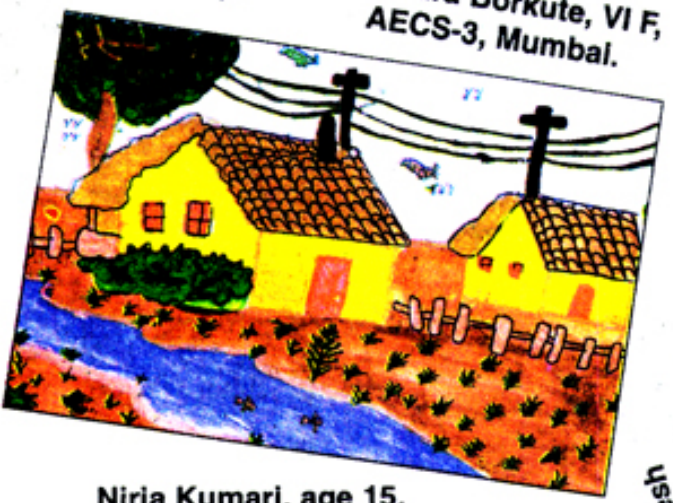
Madhumita Bhadra
II, Bhartiya
Vidhya Bhavan, Calcut

Pooja Nair, VI A,
Don Bosco, Dombivli (W)

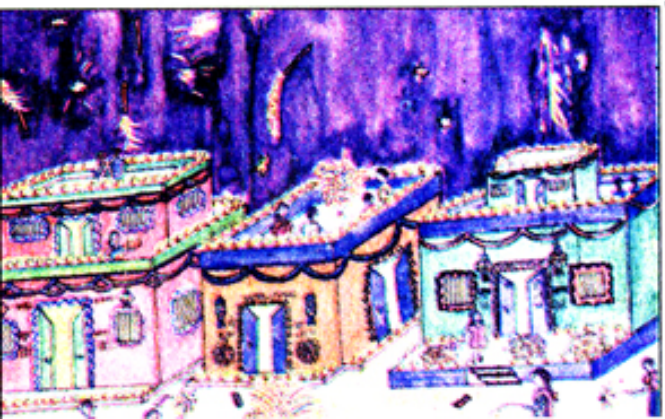


Avidi Jagadi
Rajkum
V
Theresa Conve
Rajamund

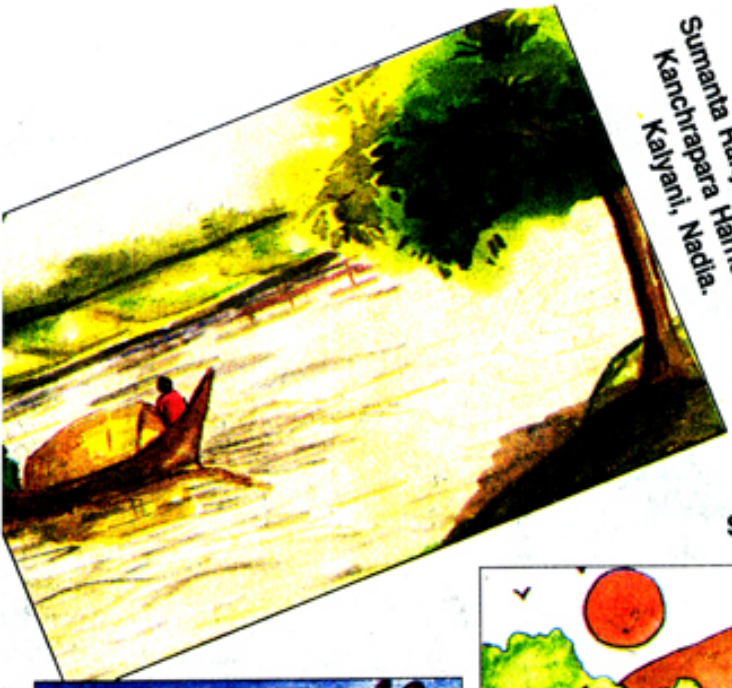
Madhura Borkute, VI F,
AECS-3, Mumbai.



Nirja Kumari, age 15,
Chittaranjan.

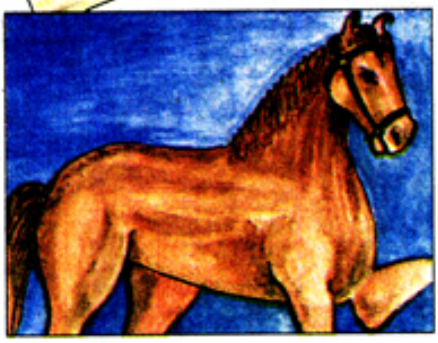


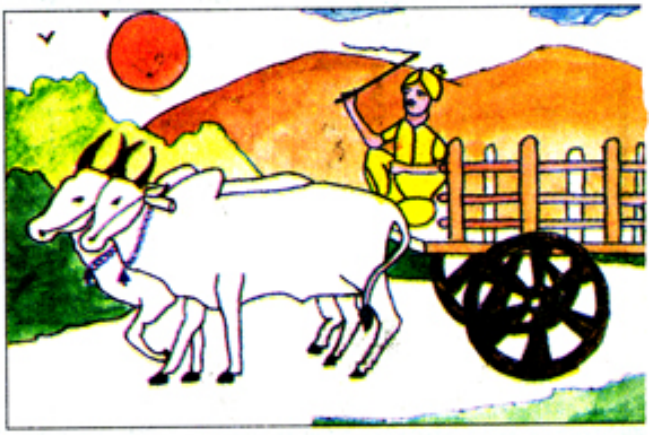
Binay Bahadur Singh, VIII A, Desh
Bandhu Vidhyalaya, Chittaranjan.



Sumanta Ranjan Pal, age 16,
Kanchrapara Harnett HS,
Kalyani, Nadia.

T. Harinie, age 8,
SBOA School, Madurai.

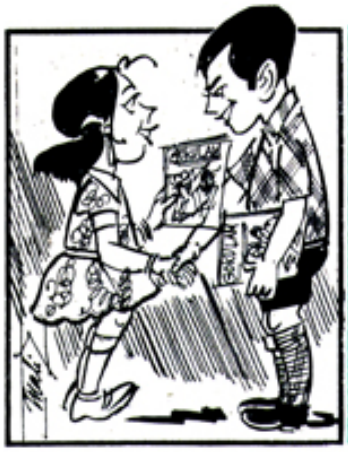




R. Santhana Krishnan, V, Annie
Besant MS, Kanchipuram.

P. Suma,
age 14,
Carmel HS,
Bangalore.

Children sending in contributions to Art gallery must include their name, age or class and school's name. Do not forget to include the house address.



ANSWER PAGE

DO YOU KNOW THEM?

1. Asia
2. Soviet Union (since fragmented)
3. Sunderbans
4. Pacific ocean
5. Jupiter
6. Christianity
7. Greenland
8. Sahara
9. Mexico
10. Hudson bay

QUIZ TIME

1. They are used for making woollen cloth.

2. A bread fruit tree is found in the South Pacific islands. The height of the tree is 60 feet.

3. The first zoo was formed in China in 12th century B.C.

4. It is found in tropical Africa.

5. Hottest - Venus because it is surrounded by a dense atmosphere of CO_2. 460°C (950°F.) Coldest - Pluto. It is the farthest planet. -230°C (-490°F)

TEST YOUR G.K.

1. Greece in 776 B.C.
2. 336 B.C.
3. 1857.
4. Light.
5. Because of gravitational force of the earth.
6. Kishinve, Ankara.
7. Rajasthan.
8. Krone, Rupee.

CRICKET GRID

A	O	P	A	M	Y	O	U	N	G
P	K	Z	L	A	T	Z	K	L	N
M	A	R	L	S	A	N	A	T	H
K	Z	J	A	D	E	J	A	T	N
T	I	O	N	M	O	P	R	A	K
Z	S	N	P	M	Y	T	P	K	L
R	L	T	Q	O	D	U	M	B	E
Q	A	Y	S	Y	N	D	A	Z	P
A	M	L	A	R	A	Y	X	T	M
D	P	R	M	Z	P	M	T	Z	I

R — QUIZ

1. ROME
2. ROSE
3. RAHUL DRAVID
4. ROENTGEN
5. RAVEN
6. RUSSIA
7. RICKETS
8. ROOSEVELT
9. RAKESH SHARMA
10. RAJIV GANDHI

USE IT!

1. Use the word "I is" and make a sentence. It should make sense!

A. I is a pronoun.

2. Use the words because, because, because. Do not split the word and it should make sense.

A. I cannot use the word because, because, "because" is a conjunction.

3. Make a sentence in which all the letters of the english alphabet are present.

A. The quick brown fox jumps over lazy dogs.

TELL ME WHY?

What is a bubble gum?

Bubble gums and chewing gums are resins that come from a tree called sapota or Sapodilla. The Sapodilla trees grow in tropical regions. The chicle (pronounced cheek'l) is a gumlike milky juice. It is the chief ingredient of chewing gum.

The Sapodilla tree grows in Mexico, British Honduras and Guatemala. The finest chicle comes from Guatemala.

How is Chicle obtained?

The Sapodilla trees are tapped and the sap is collected in much the same way as resin is collected from rubber trees.

The milky juice is boiled until it become thick and sticky. It is then kneaded to press out the water.

Chicle is a very elastic substance that can be shaped or moulded more easily than rubber.

Chicle can be obtained only during the rainy season, when the sap is flowing in the trees.

The question was sent by

Shilpa Mohan, Std. IV D,
St. Xavier's HS., Nagpur.

1st Friend : I tried surf-riding while I was in Australia.

2nd Friend : How did you get on?

1st Friend : Not very well. I couldn't get a job in a coastal city!

G.J. Roopmathi, age 13,
New Delhi

APPU & KUKU
MERRY CHRISTMAS
WHO IS THAT OLD MAN? WHAT IS HE GIVING THE CHILDREN?
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU, SANTA
HE IS SANTA CLAUS.
HE GIVES GIFTS TO CHILDREN ON CHRISTMAS DAY.
STORY AND ILLUSTRATION BY J. DISNEY

I'LL GO AND ASK FOR A GIFT!
I AM A CHILD TOO!

NO APPU, HE GIVES ONLY TO HUMAN CHILDREN.

THAT'S UNFAIR.
Boooo
I AM GOING TO SLEEP...

THANK YOU SANTA WHEREVER YOU ARE.

OH DON'T MENTION.

TO APPU & KUKU.

WHY DID YOU SAY 'DON'T MENTION'? I WAS THANKING SANTA

I HOPE HE DOESN'T FIND OUT ABOUT THE CANDY STORE AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST!

ADD COLOUR TO THIS CHRISTMAS SCENE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

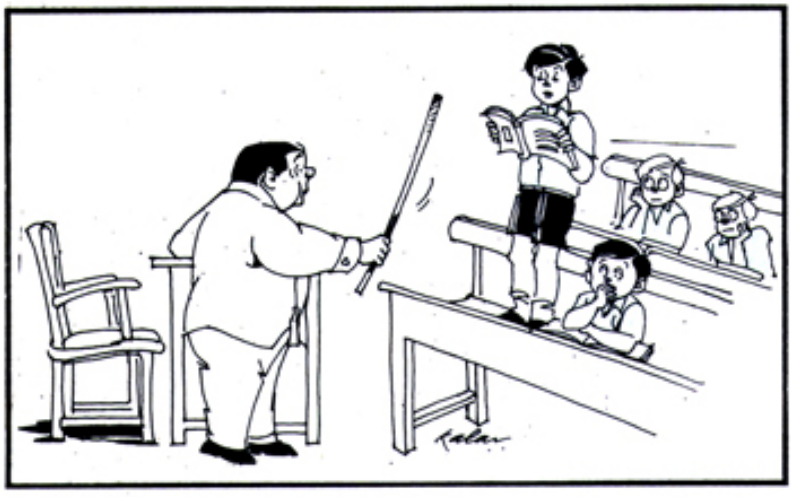
Mr. SHETTY'S SHOES

The ninth standard class was abuzz with excitement. The new history teacher had arrived. His name was Mahitesh Trishulpani. His name evoked terror among students.

"Must be a tall and hefty fellow."

"An absolute terror."

"I saw his stick - two feet long and sooo thick."



"Wonder what he looks like."

"If you don't read up your lessons I shall make you stand on the bench", one boy mimicked.

No one had been able to catch a glimpse of the history master. Apparently he had gone straight to the Principal's office. So, we had to wait till the history period. It was the first hour after lunch.

No sooner had the gong struck than the history master arrived. He fell short of our expectations. He was short and fat. Either he didn't suit his name or the name didn't suit him.

He surveyed the class and hit the table with his stick. "Open the text-books", he shouted.

I liked Mr. Shetty. I am short and his height made us both belong to the fraternity of 'shorties'.

But this liking was short-lived.

Mr. Shetty was a hard task-master. He also used the cane frequently. He was absolutely strict. We front-benchers were his frequent target (in particular his stick seemed to have taken an unusal fancy for my knuckles!). The homework he gave was also tough.

His height became the target of ridicule in the school. His name, M.T. Shetty was changed to M.T. Shorty. One wise boy made it empty-shorty.

It was a hot Friday afternoon. Mr. Shetty entered the class swinging his cane. We stood up to wish. One

back bencher was sleeping. Mr. Shetty caught hold of him.

"Sorry sir," the boy said nervously and blurted out, "You are so short that I did not see you coming. The front-benchers hid the view."

Mr. Shorty's face grew red. He did not utter another word. He left the class in a hurry.

The next morning when Mr. Shetty arrived, he was a different man. He had grown three inches taller than I. Then I realised that he was wearing padded shoes.

I suppressed a giggle and rushed to tell the rest of the class. We made a plan.

We waited with trepidation for the history period. Mr. Shorty walked in uncomfortably. He was obviously uncomfortable in the shoes and was walking unsteadily.

Then it happened! The talcum powder (pinched from the mathematics teacher), splashed on the floor, did the trick. Mr. Shorty

slipped. There was complete chaos. It was a great fall! When he managed to get up he started sneezing. "Harrtishoo", it was the powder which had tickled his nose! "Hartishoo," came another. He left the class sneezing.

The next morning we found Mr. Shetty's shoes in the garbage bin outside the school campus.

Anand.S. Kamath,
IIT, Chennai.

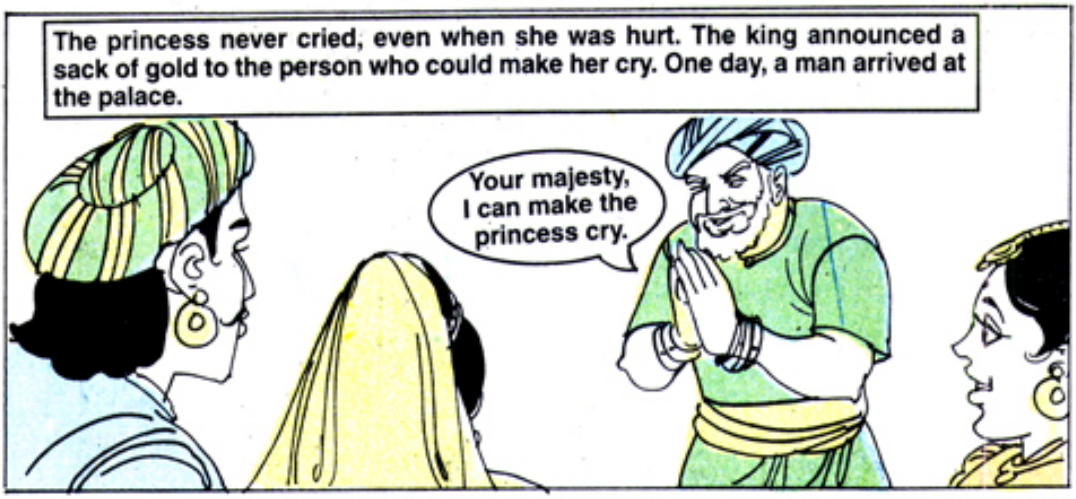
Teacher : If a cow gives one litre of milk a day, how much will it give for one week?

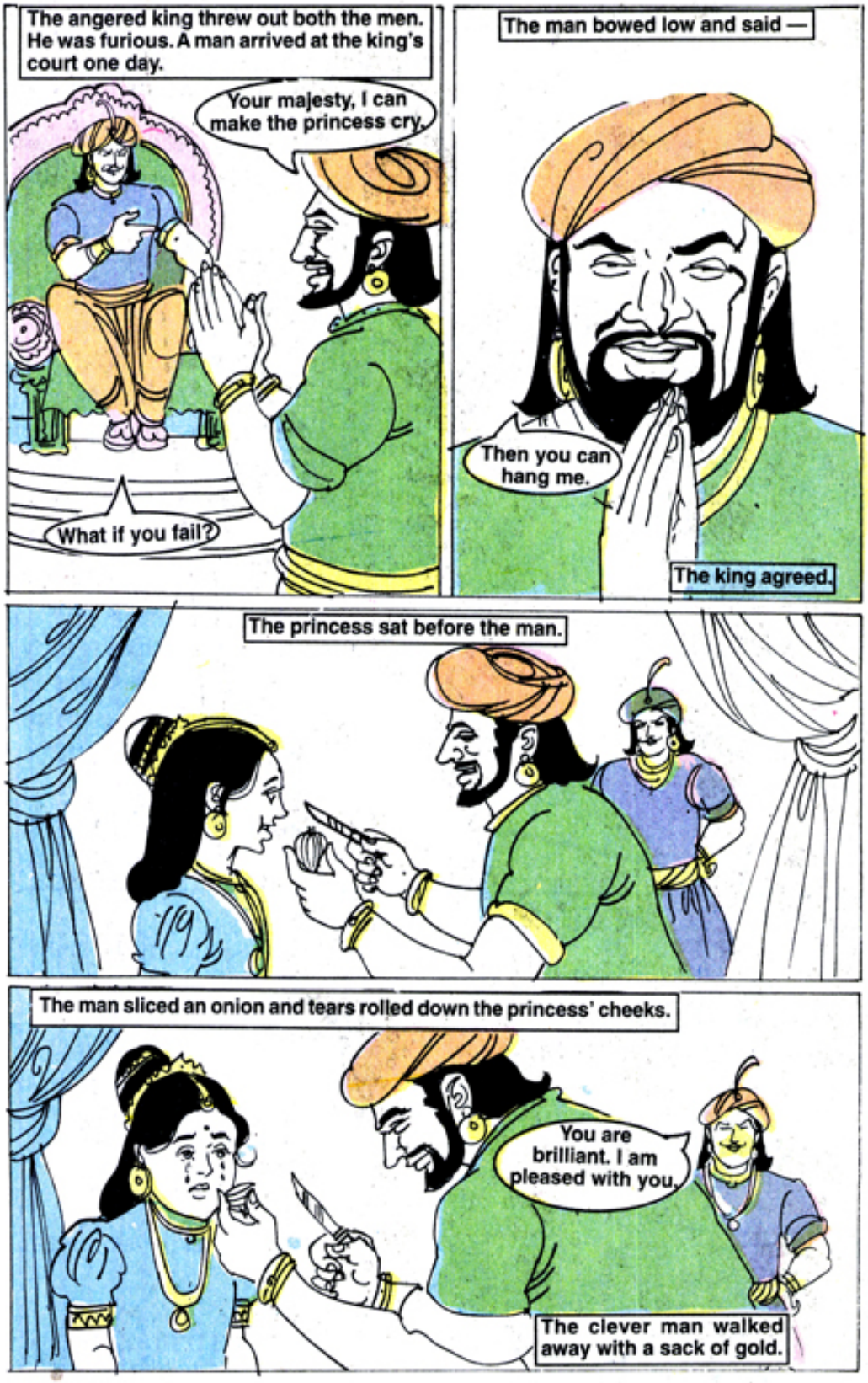
Ramesh : How many days does the cow work in a week, sir?

S. Sashidharan, VI A,
HSSS, Chennai.

THE PRINCESS WHO NEVER CRIED

Story : Tanmayi Gummaraju, age 10, The Netherlands
Dear Tanmayi, pl. send your Indian contact address.
Illustration : SASI




The angered king threw out both the men. He was furious. A man arrived at the king's court one day.
Your majesty, I can make the princess cry.
What if you fail?
The man bowed low and said —
Then you can hang me.
The king agreed.
The princess sat before the man.
The man sliced an onion and tears rolled down the princess' cheeks.
You are brilliant. I am pleased with you.
The clever man walked away with a sack of gold.

FACT-FILE

● People blind from birth cannot dream sight. Instead they dream sounds.

● Hens in the USA lay over 1,380,000 eggs every minute, according to a study.

● The Indian Epic called 'Mahabharata' contains almost three million words.

● Rainbows only occur when the sun is at an angle of less than 40° above the horizon.

● The English word with most meanings is the simple three letter word 'set'. It has 51 meanings as a noun, 126 meanings as a verb and 10 meanings as participle adjective.

● Leonardo da Vinci could write with one hand and draw with the other at the same time.

● You can tell a fish's age by counting the rings on its scales in the same way that you can estimate the age of a tree by counting the rings in the trunk.

Sriram R. Das, Std. IX C,
KV., Ottapalam.

RIDDLES

Q : Why did Santa spell 'Noel' as 'N-o-e'?

A : Because the angel had pronounced her name as 'No L'.

Q : What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

A : Snowflakes.

Q : Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

A : Because he had low elf-esteem.

Q : What are the three stages of men?

A : 1) He who believes in Santa Claus; 2) He who does not believe in Santa Claus 3) He who is Santa Claus.

Q : What do elves learn in school?

A : The elf-abet.

Q : If athletes get athlete's foot, what do astronauts get?

A : Mistletoe.

Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai.

SOLDIER

I joined the army at the age of 20. It is a hectic life. My father, a retired army officer, wanted me to join the army. At first I was frightened. The training given at the army camp was tough. But I was determined.

After training I was posted in B.S.F. to guard the border areas. I was sad at the thought of leaving my family. I joined duty and life proceeded smoothly. One day my senior officer informed us that intruders had crept through the border into the country. They had to be driven out.

Three units were prepared for this operation. There were about a thousand soldiers in each unit. I was in the first one. Our duty was to capture one of the hills where the intruders were hiding. It was an uphill task.

We climbed the hill cautiously. The night was dark. We had no torches as they would alert the enemy. A friend and I were moving slowly. My foot hit a rock and I fell down. The enemy was alerted and four intruders stood in front of us.

We jumped to the opposite side, hid ourselves behind a rock and started firing. One of my bullets hit a fat intruder. The rest had vanished. My friend told me that he had exhausted his stock of bullets. It was then I noticed the rifle lying near the dead man.

When I went to pick it up, the three intruders emerged from nowhere. I started firing. The enemy also fired. The three intruders dropped dead.

I saw blood trickling down my right arm before falling unconscious.

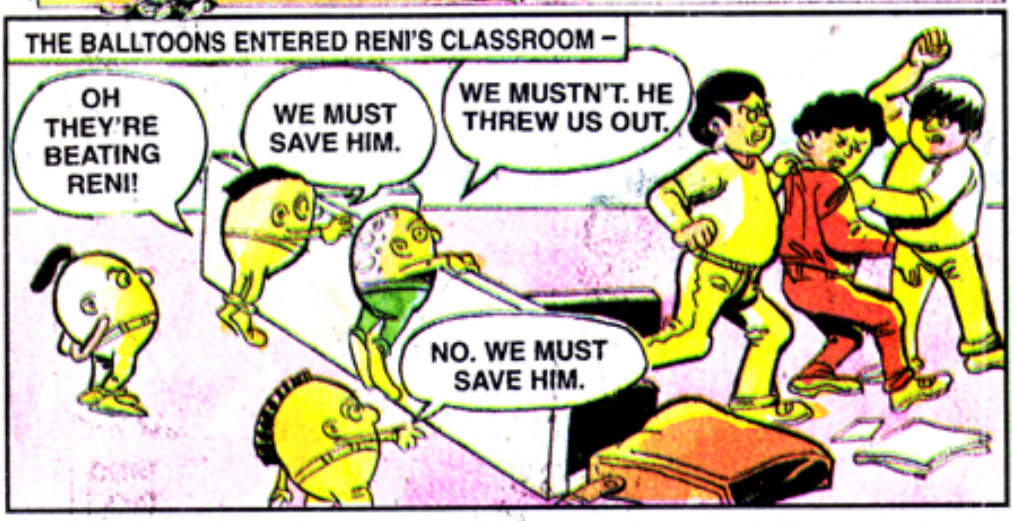
When I woke up, I found myself in a hospital. I was a hero to everyone. The bullets were removed and my right hand was amputated. My photograph appeared in the newspaper.

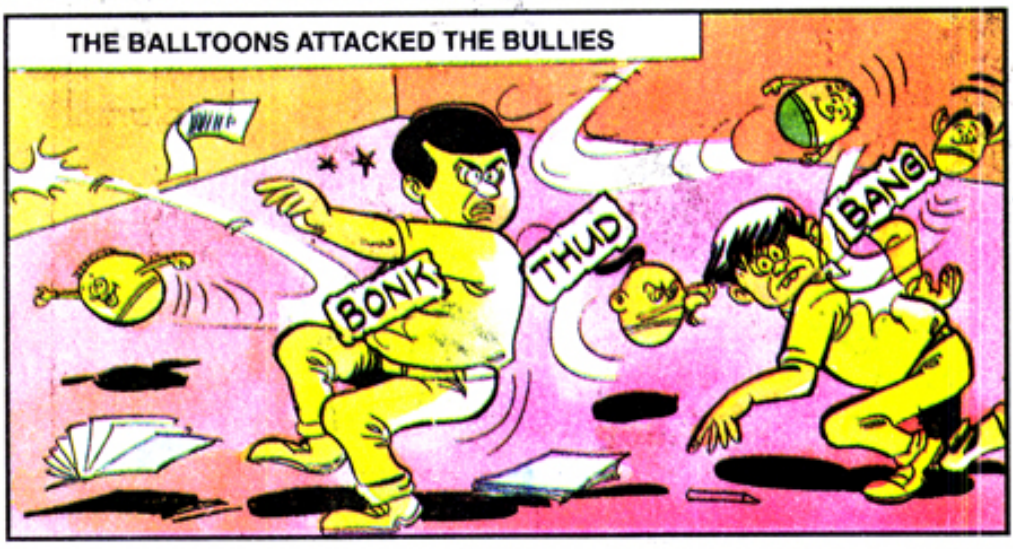
I thank god for having given me courage to fight for our country.

Praveen Kumar, age 16,
D.T.E.A. Sr. Sec. School,
New Delhi.

BALLTOONS

Art : C.J. Roy Script : Chalam 13





WHERE'S THE GHOST?
THERE WERE NO GHOSTS. THEY LIED.
YOUR GHOST GAME IS GETTING ON MY NERVES. WHERE'S YOUR BAG?
THE TEACHER SEARCHED THE BAG.
THERE'S NOTHING IN THIS...
WHEN EVERYBODY HAD LEFT THE SCHOOL
COME ON, COME ON, EVERYBODY. WE'RE GOING HOME! SWEET HOME!
99 Malay Features World Rights Reserved
WITH THE BALLTOONS IN HIS BAG, RENI HEADED HOME.

THE END

A USEFUL BEING

Once emperor Akbar called Birbal and asked him to bring two living beings — one useful and the other, harmful.

The next day Birbal came to the royal court with a dog and a young man. The nobles in the court laughed at the funny entourage. Birbal introduced the man and the dog to the king. He said, "Your Majesty, this dog is a useful living being."

"How?" asked the emperor.

"The dog is always faithful to his master. Whatever food you give, it will eat happily. Even if you kick it, it will not desert the master," answered Birbal.

"Who is that man?" Akbar asked.

Birbal replied, "He is my son-in-law. I have given him a lot yet he is not satisfied. I have got nothing in return. He is a harmful being."

"All sons-in-laws" Akbar said, "are harmful. Let this man be hanged."

Birbal hadn't expected this. He said, "Your majesty! You are a son-in-law of someone. So this punishment applies to you too."

Akbar withdrew his orders, when he realised that Birbal was right.

Sudipta Nandi, age 11,
St. Agnes Girls School,
Kharagpur.

My neighbour's maid

She was always cheerful and exuded warmth. She wore her well-oiled hair in a braid. A string of flowers adorned her braid. She wore colourful glass bangles. The well-washed, wornout half-sari was draped neatly around her petite form. A constant smile played on her lips. She was about my age.

As I walked in my garden, I could hear the clink of the bangles and her anklets as she went about the household chores of our neighbour. I could often hear her humming a tune.

One day, during a chat, I asked her why she wasn't in school. She said, "My father passed away when I was young. My mother was terminally ill. I had to support two young siblings. I send my earnings to my village. My brother and sister are studying. I want them to become doctors."

She was often scolded for even small errors. Yet, she went about her work with a song on her lips. I was ashamed of my tantrums and sulkiness. I learnt to be cheerful in the face of all odds. Like her.

One day, I heard a commotion. I ran to the garden and looked over the fence. My neighbour was accusing her maid. "You stole my gold necklace, you disloyal girl." A string of abuses followed. The girl's pleas that she had nothing to do with the theft fell on deaf ears.

I urged my mother to do something about it. I wanted to help the girl. All that my mother said was, "it is not manners to poke our nose into other people's affairs."

The next day, the maid bade me goodbye. Her smile was in place. "Perhaps I shall have better luck in the next place I work in," were her parting words.

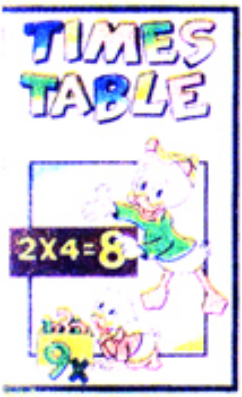
My mother later told me that the necklace had been found in some cabinet of the neighbour's house. The maid, however, refused to return to work there. She has gone but the clink of her bangles and anklets and her smile are still fresh in my memory.

S. Hemamalini, Std. XI,
DAV MHSS, Chennai.

Gulmohar, an imprint of Orient Longman Ltd., has come out with a set of books.

The Message of Thunder and Other Plays

This book is a collection of five one-act plays. Each deals with saints of the yore. The stories are based on real-life incidents in their lives. The plays can be enacted by children with a little help from adults. The book is priced Rs. 40.



Vinegar King and Hot Soup and **The Hungry Emperor and the Clever Barber**

are four stories for children below ten. These Chinese tales have been retold by Champa Tickoo. The pictures are by Samina Baig. Each of these books is priced Rs. 25.

The Midnight Train and Other Ghost Stories

by Reeta Dutta Gupta is aimed at teenagers. These are stories of ghosts and strange happenings. Some stories deal with social evils like sati, ill-treatment of women etc. The book is priced Rs. 60.

Gulmohar, Orient Longman Limited,
3-6-272, Himayatnagar,
Hyderabad - 500 029.

The following two books are available at the below mentioned address.

M.C.C. Publications,
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FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

Times Table :

An easy guide to time tables, is priced Rs. 18. This has been brought out by MCC Publications, Bangalore.

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THE CIRCULATION MANAGER

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CHINA'S

The panda is a hot favourite among Chinese children. They are herbivores. Their immediate ancestors were carnivores. They are large, bear like creatures.

Pandas are an endangered species. Their only predators are the leopard and the wild dog. Pandas lead a solitary life. Only during the mating season are the pandas seen in pairs. They survive only on bamboo leaves.

Occasionally they feed on shoots and stems. They need to eat a large amount of leaves and drink plenty of water in order to get the necessary nutrients for their large bodies. Pandas don't destroy crops. So, if they happen to stray into human habitats, they are not killed.

Baby pandas are tiny white creatures at birth. The markings occur in the second week. Pandas are not aggressive. The mother panda will make a den on the hollow of a tree. When the baby is born the mother panda will not leave her den. She feeds the baby her milk.

* Pandas are difficult to rear in captivity

Panda cubs are weaned from mother's milk only when they are nine months old. Mother pandas will go to any extent to protect their cubs.

The mother injests faeces and urine and keeps the den and her baby clean. This is why even with the best devoted care by humans pandas born in captivity often do not survive. Only half of the total pandas born in captivity survive. Once the panda habitat extended from Beijing in the north to Yang Sekiang in the south. Today there are only six pockets of panda habitat. Bamboo has been felled indiscriminately and pandas have been hunted for their fur. There are only 100 pandas in capti-

vity. If pandas are not conserved they may become extinct by the end of the next century. The only way to conserve the panda is to protect its habitat.

Pandas love to climb trees just for the sport or to bask in sunshine. Baby pandas follow their mothers until they are about three years. They are ready to breed when they are six or seven years old.

Even in the wild, if a panda gives birth to two cubs only one cub may survive.

It is believed that the panda may have developed its marking during the Ice Age. Breeding pandas in captivity is extremely difficult. The female panda is in heat for only 15 to 25 days in spring each year. The embryo is implanted late and the panda needs plenty of food to make it healthy enough to produce cubs.

Much effort is being taken by wildlife authorities to conserve panda population. Injured pandas are treated and then returned to their habitat. Scientists and conservationists believe that once the panda population increases substantially in captivity they can be returned to their natural habitat.

Pandas are found only in China. So, plenty of effort has gone into conserving this harmless, lovable creature. Chinese kings used to rear pandas as pets. Pandas are believed to ward of evils and natural disasters. Many Chinese use pandas as good-luck charm in their homes.

CUDDLY BEAR

IN THE WILD

VIEWPOINT

An Indian abroad...

An unhappy situation in our country is the enormous brain drain. Our best students migrate

to foreign countries in search of fortune. They believe that India's educational facilities leave much to be desired. Students think that a degree from Oxford or Harvard carries more weight than a degree from an Indian college. This is not true. Students from institutes like the IIT and BITS Pilani are respected world over.

There is nothing wrong in studying abroad. Wouldn't you be doing your country a good turn by serving it? There is no harm in utilising foreign technology and techniques which may improve the standard of living of our countrymen. An exposure to technology used abroad will improve our people's life only if it is imparted to the future generations.

Indians settled abroad look down upon their mother country. They often forget that wherever they go, they will remain an Indian by origin. After all, they do owe their education and upbringing to their motherland.

C. Vikram, Std. XI B,
PSSSS, Chennai.

Theism helps

I agree with Anulekha that we should not depend on pujas and pujaris to cure us of our physiological problems (Oct. '99).

* People often seek god's blessings for a long and healthy life.

If, however, one continued to boycott the belief in god and puja, it may have an adverse effect. The doctor may use his medical knowledge to cure the patient. A few prayers do instil in the sick a confidence that they will recover. There are incidents where a terminally ill patient has sustained life long enough for the doctor to appear on the scene. These incidents are very common in remote villages where medical facilities are not easily available.

At such times, pujas do help. Eventually it is proper medical attention that helps the sick to recover.

R. Nivas, XII E,
BHEL MHSS,
Tiruchirapalli.

We need books

Good books are always worth reading. They provide us knowledge. Reading books develops one's curiosity for information. Students still insist on learning by rote the answers given in their notebooks. They blindly repeat these answers during tests. Reading good books will help to broaden's one's mind.

R. Pavithra, Std. VII B,
Mahatma Gandhi Centenary Vidhyalaya, Trichy.

Why so?

Last week, I went to a hospital

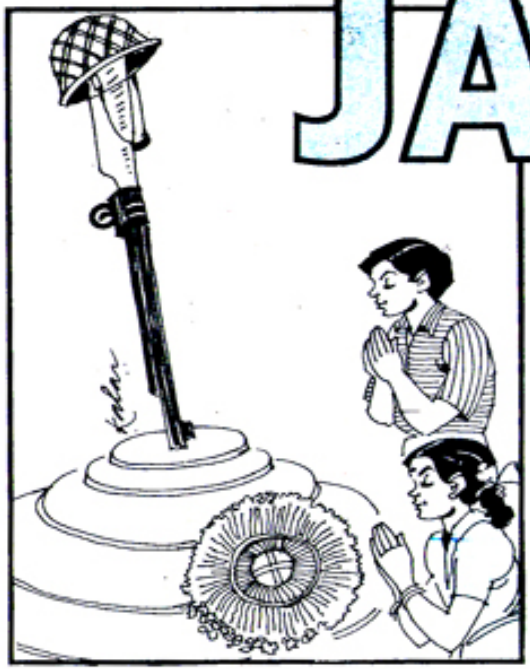
with my mother to visit her friend. There we saw my friend's grandmother, waiting to see the doctor. I wondered why nobody from her house had accompanied her? She was very weak and needed help. Parents are working hard because they want a secure future for their children. They shower so much love on their children. But, the children enjoy watching different channels on T.V. They do not take care of their parents. This habit should change. They should take care of their parents and encourage their children to do so. This will pave way for a healthy society.

S. Anulekha, IPDC,
NSS College,
Thiruvananthapuram.

VIEWPOINT

SPECIAL VIEWPOINT

OUR JAWAN

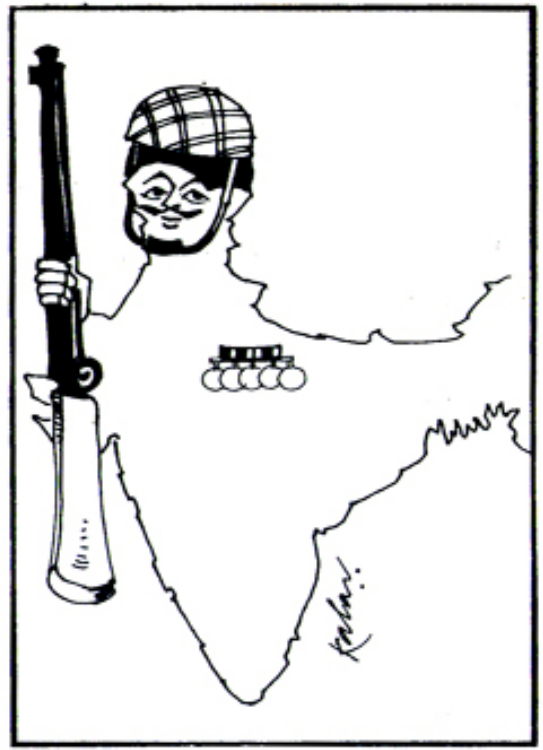


The Indian defence force with its three wings is one of the finest in the world. Men who serve the defence forces have chosen the life of a fighter and protector. This choice speaks for their physical, mental and moral strength. They have taken a difficult path. They are ever ready to die so that we may live in peace.

They have to undergo long and hard training. They are strong, brave, smart, intelligent and disciplined. We feel proud of them when we see them marching along in uniform.

Their prime duty is to defend our motherland against its enemies. This is the noblest but most dangerous task. They do it with all devotion, courage, skill, watchfulness and determination.

The first class qualities of our jawans were witnessed during the Indo-Pak conflicts of 1965 and 1971. During peacetime we see the jawans helping people in



distress. During natural cala-mities like floods, earthquakes, etc., they help to evacuate and rehablitate people.

We must do whatever we can for our jawans' welfare. We could contribute generously to the funds collected for their welfare.

Deepika Khanwadia, VIII E,
AECS, Tarapur - 1, Thane.

A SURPRISE GIFT

Mr. Wilson's warm party was to usher in christmas. A stray pup, two buildings away was foraging in the dustbin. It was hoping to find something edible in it. A passerby who noticed the pup kicked it. It yelped in pain and scampered off. The cold wind was making even walking difficult.

Sarah stood by her window wishing she could have a pet. Tonight was Christmas eve. If Santa Claus appeared she could ask him. All these years seven-year-old Sarah had tried to keep awake on Christmas eve.

She walked into the brightly lit living room. Mrs. Wilson looked up immediately. "Shouldn't you be in bed, Sarah?" she asked, and gently pushed Sarah out of the room.

"No, mother. I'm waiting for Santa," said Sarah. Sarah's mother did not have the heart to tell her that Santa appeared only in fairy tales. She did not want to disappoint Sarah. So she said, "Santa will come only after midnight when all of us are asleep."

"Is that so? How will he then know what present I want for Christmas? That I have been good all year?" asked Sarah.

"Oh, Santa knows everything. Now off to your room and don't sneak upto the Christmas tree."

Sarah had to give in. Her parents kept a sack of presents beneath the Christmas tree. They were given away to their friends and relatives during the party. Sarah's presents were given to her on Christmas Day.

The stray pup had still not found food. He trotted up to the building where bright lights shone. People walked out of the house in pairs and groups.

Soon, the house was silent. The pup looked up. A window was ajar. It jumped on to the window sill. To its pleasant surprise, the room was warm. It was thrilled. It scampered round the room. At one end was a tree. Bulbs twinkled. The pup watched it for sometime. It then noticed a sack beneath the tree. It was as if the sack had been placed

there just for the pup. It wriggled into the sack. Soon, it was fast asleep.

Sarah woke up at six. She had to find what presents Santa had left for her.

She ran to the living room. She opened the sack. She removed each present. She squealed in delight when her favourite sketch pens lay before her.

There were plenty of gifts and then...

She removed a soft object. She thought it was a teddy bear. But what was this? It was a puppy! Sarah hugged the sleeping pup to her. She cooed into its ears. The pup woke up with a start from its snooze. Sarah thought, 'Santa heard my prayer after all'!

It did not take Sarah's parents long to find out how the puppy had entered the room. They did not have the heart to deny her the puppy. Finally, Sarah's father said, "Very well. Promise me that you will take care of this puppy. You must take it for walks, clean it and give it its meal regularly."

"I promise, I promise," said Sarah jumping with joy.

"Then take the pup straight to the bathroom. It needs a bath right away," mother said.

"Yes, mummy," said Sarah and ran to the bathroom with her very own pet. Only when the puppy had been bathed well, did Sarah realise that the puppy was not really black. Its white coat was littered with black spots. "It is a dalmatian," Sarah exclaimed.

She ran with the puppy into the kitchen. "Mum, it's a dalmatian," Sarah said.

Mother looked up. "So she is. Now rub her down lest she catches cold."

Sarah did as she was told. She named her Lucky.

Five years later, Lucky had given birth to five pups. Sarah placed each pup in a basket and left them at the doorsteps of five of her neighbours. They had often envied her pet, she knew.

She would ring the bell and then hide behind a tree and wait. She watched with pleasure as the children squealed in delight when they saw the pup.

Lakshmi B. Gopinath, Std. VII B,
St. Felix HS, Pune.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The ancient games

The Olympic games started around 776 BC. It was played every four years and even now we play it every four years.

In ancient Greece, the games were played in the city of Olympia in a huge stadium called Elis. Only men played.

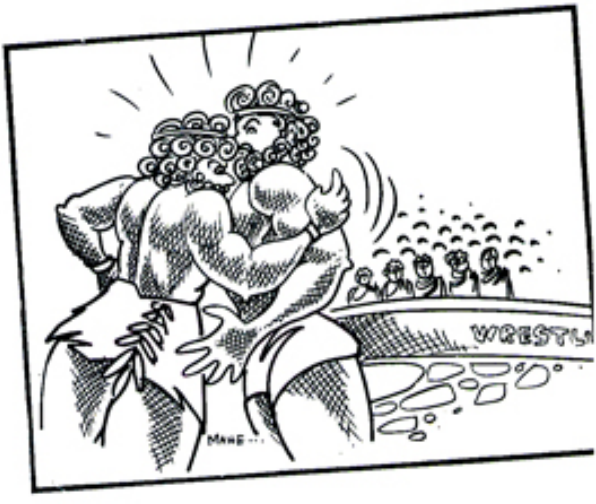
Women were neither allowed to participate nor watch the games. The players wore no clothes. At first, only one event was held. A sprint about 192 m. long.

Other sports such as the pentathlon and the chariot race were later added. The stadium was 192 m. long. For some races the men wore armour.

A woman once wanted to see her young son take part in the games. She disguised herself as a man and watched the games. When her son came first in an event, she was so happy that she jumped into the arena and blew her cover.

Many men from this woman's family were champions. So she was not killed.

Three different types of running races were held. They were called stade (one lap around the track); diaulos (two laps) and dolichos (20 or 25 laps around the track). Three types of wrestling events



— 1) upright wrestling, where the opponent had to be overthrown three times to win; 2) ground wrestling, where the match went on until the opponent gave up and 3) pankration, where anything except eye-gouging and biting was allowed!

The winners did not get any money.

An olive wreath was placed on his head.

The ancient Olympic games were held for five days. On the first day, prayers were offered to Zeus. Chariot races were held on the forenoon of the second day. In the afternoon, running races were held. On the third day, 100 cows were sacrificed to the god Zeus, in whose honour the games were held. On the fourth day, the pentathlon which consisted of five sports - running, discus, javelin, long jump and wrestling, was held. On the fifth day, winners received their olive wreath.

Some athletes became professionals and did not pay taxes. Messengers travelled around Greece telling athletes to come to the games to be held at Olympia. All ongoing wars were suspended so that the athletes travelling to the games venue were not harmed.

Why the games was given up remains unknown. Some people say it was because of the death of Alexander the Great. Romans conquered Greece. The emperor, Theodosius, banned the games in 393 AD. Some people say that the games ended in 395 AD when Olympia was destroyed by two terrible earthquakes. The world had to wait for 1500 years till the next Olympic games were held.

* India has won gold at the Games in hockey

The modern games

The founder of the modern Olympic games was Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a Frenchman. During his travels he learnt how the Greeks had admired the human body and the mind. He convinced people in

* A large number of women participate today

* Leander Paes - Winner of bronze medal at Olympics

* Jyotirmayi Sikder - A hope of medal.

various countries that the Olympic games was a good way of teaching international understanding to the youth of the world.

He organised an Olympic Committee in 1894 which was attended by people from 13 nations. He wanted the first Olympic games to be held in Paris in 1900. Greece argued its case to hold the new games in its original place. They were held in Athens in 1896. A shepherd, Spiridon Louis, won the first modern marathon, from Marathon to Athens.

It was the same route that was run by a Greek legendary soldier called Pheidippides in 490 BC, who collapsed dead after carrying the news of a battle victory. Nine sports were played and 311 athletes (from 13 countries) participated. In the 1996 Olympic games held in Atlanta, USA, over 10,000 athletes from 197 countries participated in 26 different games.

Wars and the Games

In 1916, 1940 and 1944 the Games were cancelled because of the First and Second World War. Sebastian Coe, Mark Spitz and Carl Lewis are some of the Olympic heroes.

The ancient ideal of Olympic games was promoting peace and goodwill. In Munich, 1972, at the Olympic games 11 Israeli athletes were killed by Palestinian terrorists. In 1976, African countries boycotted the Games because

How the Olympic Games have grown

DATE	CITY	COUNTRIES	SPORTS	ATHLETES
1896	Athens	13	9	311
1900	Paris	26	12	1225
1904	St. Louis	13	10	687
1908	London	22	17	2035
1912	Stockholm	28	13	2547
1916	CANCELLED — WAR			
1920	Antwerp	29	19	2669
1924	Paris	44	18	3092
1928	Amsterdam	46	16	3014
1932	Los Angeles	37	15	1408
1936	Berlin	49	19	4066
1940	Tokyo — CANCELLED — WAR			
1944	London — CANCELLED — WAR			
1948	London	59	17	4099
1952	Helsinki	69	17	4925
1956	Melbourne	67	16	3184
1960	Rome	83	17	5384
1964	Tokyo	93	19	5140
1968	Mexico City	112	19	5530
1972	Munich	121	21	7123
1976	Montreal	92	21	6028
1980	Moscow	80	21	5217
1984	Los Angeles	140	21	6797
1988	Seoul	159	23	8465
1992	Barcelona	169	25	9367
1996	Atlanta	197	26	10,000

New Zealand was playing rugby with apartheid South Africa. In 1980, America and other major nations did not participate because of Russia's involvement in Afghanistan.

In 1984, the Soviet Union refused to come to Los Angeles. In 1988, there was a major stay away when North Korea, Cuba, Ethiopia and Nicaragua refused to compete in South Korea.

The Olympic games were first televised from Berlin in 1936. Today, it is one of the biggest television events in the world.

Winter Olympics

The winter sports were first included in 1908. In 1924, the winter games began to be held separately. The first winter games were held at Chamonix, France and consisted of 16 events. In 1986, it was decided to hold the winter games two years after the summer games. In 1994, Winter Games were held in Lillehammer, Norway.

The Flag

The Olympic flag is made up of five coloured rings - blue, yellow, black, green and red, joined together on a white background. The five colours in the rings represent the five major continents, and at least one colour is found in the national flags of the participating countries.

R. Prashanth, age 11,
Northside Primary School,
Gaborone, Botswana.

Dear Prashanth, pl. send your Indian contact address.

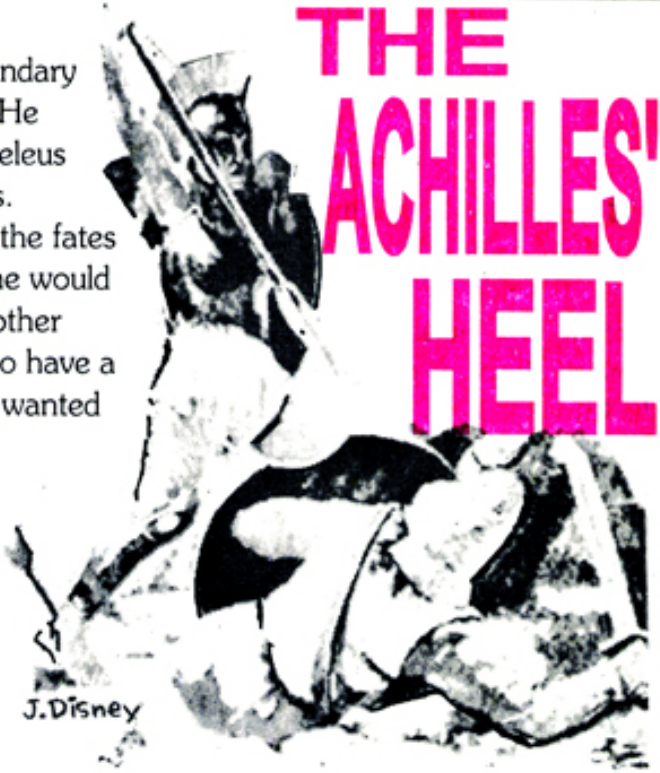
DID YOU KNOW?

◆ About 70 percent of India's population is living in rural areas. Although India's land mass is 2.5 percent of the world's area, we have 12 percent of the total agricultural area of the world.

◆ Sanjeev Kumar, a research scholar in the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai has developed a unique vehicle that can run without a driver. It can move automatically on any surface, based on signals reflecting from other vehicles and objects around.

M. Shalini, Std. XI,
SBOA MHSS, Madurai.

THE ACHILLES' HEEL



Achilles was a legendary hero of Greece. He was the son of Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis. Even before he was born the fates had told his mother that he would die young. Thetis like all other mothers wanted her son to have a long and happy life. She wanted to make him immortal by plunging him into the river Styx - a river of Hades, across which Charon ferried the souls of the dead.

The waters of the river Styx had magical properties and could give protection from all harms. She held the baby by his heels while plunging him into the river. The heel did not get wet and Achilles had a small vulnerable point in his body — though the rest of his body became invulnerable. He was still a mortal.

Years later, when the Trojan war broke out, Thetis dressed him as a girl and hid him among the women at the court of the King of Seyros. She did this so that he would not have to join the war. But soon, he was discovered by Ulysses. Achilles fought on the Greek side during the Trojan war. He was proclaimed a great hero, after he slayed the Trojan hero Hector.

Paris, Hector's brother, shot a poisoned arrow at Achilles. God Apollo guided the arrow to the only vulnerable part of his body — his heel! Achilles died from the wound.

Ever since, an Achilles' heel means a small but significant weak ness or a vulnerable spot. The Achilles tendon attaches the calf muscle to the heel bone. Very frequently athletes strain this tendon — as this is their vulnerable point.

Visalakshi Ramani,
Coimbatore.

EXPERIENCE

Lift trouble

I was in standard IV then. We were visiting an aunt who was hospitalised. At the hospital, the lift held a strange attraction for me and my sisters. Our mother refused us per- mission to use the lift.

We, however, ignored her and entered the lift. One of my sisters pressed a button. The door did not close. She now pressed another button. The door closed. It went to the seventh floor. The lift would not move from there.

My sister tried all buttons on the switchboard. Nothing happened. We shouted through the grill hoping to attract attention.

A man who walked by came up to us and suggested that we push the green coloured knob on the switchboard. Neither my sisters nor I had tried to meddle with that button.

When we turned the green knob, the lift returned to the ground floor.

We were relieved.

That night, however, my mother gave us a piece of her mind for not listening to her.

P.A. Swapna, age 10,
St. John's Church HS,
Secunderabad.

Winning became sweet

The school was gearing up for the annual sports meet. My house master and tutor announced the names for two events - shotput and discus. I was shocked to hear that I had been included in both these events. I was not one given to sports. I was afraid of not being able to win a prize and thus put my house to shame.

Since we had a week for the meet, I decided to practise. On the day of the meet I was still unsure. When I was

called, I decided to give it a final try. My earlier attempt with the discus had been a fiasco.

I picked up the shotput and threw it with all my might. It did fall very far from where I stood. When the results for the senior girls shotput event was announced, I jumped with joy. I was the second prize winner. I had done my house proud. As I climbed the victory stand I felt at the top of the world. My PT teacher said I could do better. He said that I just had to practise a little more. I saluted the chief guest and received my prize. It was an unforgettable moment.

C. Pavithra, Std. X A,
Soundararaja Vidhyalaya,
Dindigul.

When luck held

I was taking my annual exams of class VII. My school is about one km from home. I go to school by cycle. I

usually leave my house 15 minutes before the commencement of the test.

I was late for one test. Luckily, the school clock was slow by five minutes on that day! I ran to the exam hall just before the test began. I wonder what would have happened had I missed that test.

Anoop, VIII A, KV, BEML,
KGF.

Magic magnet

Once my mother was returning

from the market by bus. A cyclist collided with the bus. In the commotion following this, my mother absent-mindedly placed her purse next to her on the seat. The purse contained some money, keys to the house, and an address notebook. Only when she was about to alight from the bus did she notice that her purse had been stolen.

She borrowed some money from a neighbour and rang up my father. Our neighbours on learning what had happened, helped my mother. She had placed a spare key bunch on the shelf inside the house.

A neighbour brought an old magnet from his house. He tied it to a long pole and passed it through the grill on

the window. The key bunch stuck to the magnet and thus my mother was able to enter the house. While removing the key bunch, a few items on the showcase were knocked off. One was a fine work of art which mother had bought during a visit to Sikkim. My mother was more upset over losing this piece than over the loss of her purse.

The next day, we had a call from a woman. She said that she had found a purse which contained some keys and a telephone book. We changed the locks on the doors of the house lest the thief had duplicated the keys.

B. Mukund, VI B, KV, Chennai.

Stranded passengers

I was travelling to Kanyakumari by train. Our summer vacations had been declared and my family and I were visiting our relatives at Kanya- kumari. A large family of uncles, a few cousins besides my mother, brother and sister boarded the train. The journey was pleasant. We busied ourselves with several rounds of card games, antaksharis and dumb charades.

It is an overnight journey from Chennai. The next morning around 7.30 a.m. we heard strange sounds. We saw people downing shutters in the compartment. My mother prom- ptly asked us to down the shutters. The train had halted. Word spread that the driver

of the train had been kidnapped. His arm had been broken. A large crowd had stopped the train. We saw people armed with large knives, sticks and stones approach the train.

We were merely two hours away from Kanyakumari station. We stayed in the train throughout the day. Finally late in the evening the train moved and we reached Kanyakumari around 9 p.m. We heaved a sigh of relief when we reached the station.

We had spent the entire day without food and water. We learnt that the people had ghaeroed the train because their MLA had not delivered on his election promise.

R. Laxmi, age 15,
Balalok MHSS, Chennai.

Dear Laxmi, pl. send your house address.

Brave NISHA

In the village of Imayapuri lived an old woman with her ten year old granddaughter. The old woman lived on the edge of the forest.

The dense forest was home to a gang of dacoits who looted travellers. They would threaten the travellers at knife point and loot them of their valuables.

One season few travellers passed through the forest. The bandits decided to loot the village abutting the forest.

A couple of bandits posed as thirsty travellers and entered the old woman's hut. No sooner had they entered the hut than the old woman realised that the men were dreaded dacoits.

The old woman's granddaughter, Nisha who returned from the village pond just then realised that something was wrong. She overheard two dacoits seated under the tree discuss a scheme. She understood that the dacoits were planning to loot the village that night.

She thought out a plan to have the dacoits captured. Her grandmother said, "I'm too old child, to run. I don't have the strength even to walk up to the village chief's house."

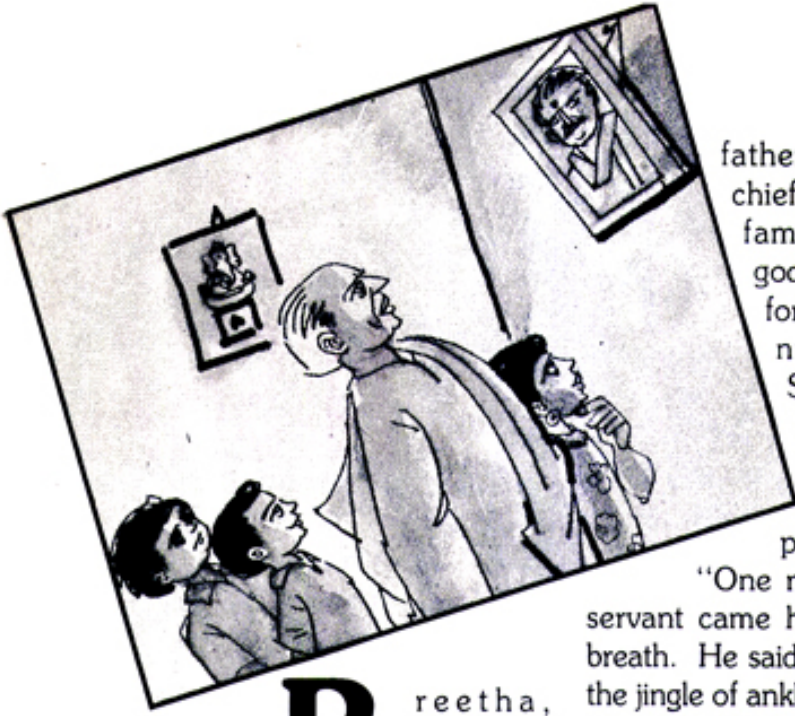
The girl was adamant. The old woman looked on helplessly as the dacoits helped themselves to all the food available in the hut.

Soon, the dacoits fell asleep. Nisha wasted no time. She pulled her grandmother along with her and bolted the door from outside. She ran all the way to the village chief's house.

She narrated to the village chief all that had happened and fainted. The village chief rounded up the dacoits immediately. The girl's courage was praised by all.

S. Rajambal, Std. VII A,
Sitalakshmi GHSS, Madurai.

Rendezvous with A GHOST



Preetha, Santhosh and Ashok arrived for the summer holidays. Great grandpa was the children's favourite. Preetha walked upto great grandpa. He was gazing at a portrait on the wall. The man in the protrait was his father.

Santhosh and Ashok arrived just then. They sat around grandpa just as he began, "76 years ago....."

Santhosh intervened. "Is it a story?"

"Hush!" said Preetha. "Else, he may not tell you."

"I was only ten years old," grandpa continued. He gazed at the photograph. "My uncle's two-year-old child had just died. In those days, people lived in big, traditional joint families. My father was the village chief. Every year our family held puja for goddess Kali, praying for health and continued prosperity. Since we were mourning the death of the child, we did not perform the puja.

"One night, Govind, our servant came home, panting for breath. He said that he had heard the jingle of anklets but hadn't seen anyone. He told us that this had happened near the Kali mandir.

"My father convinced him that it was only his imagination. The next day, we heard that Govind had died. Rumours of ghost-sighting could not be squashed. Some heard only the anklets. Others heard the ghost sing! Yet others heard a woman talk to herself and laugh. People came to my father in dozens. They wanted the kali puja conducted. Some said that Kali was unhappy and so she

was destroying the village.

"Everything changed. Mothers did not let their children out. The men were afraid to venture out of the house. Farmers worried constantly about the ghost. Their lands remained unattended. Food was becoming scarce. The village went to sleep immediately after sunset. Some people migrated to nearby towns in fear. We were all confused. This was madness. My father was puzzled. He was ashamed of the villagers.

Days passed. The young men of the village said, 'Kali knows us very well. She knows we have a valid reason for not conducting the puja

This is the second prize winning story in the horror story contest.

this year.' They carried on with their usual work.

"One day some villagers rushed into our house. They said, 'We heard the ghost laugh. It was a woman.' Father was aghast. Brave men were being taken for a ride. He decided that the puja would be conducted.

"Forget the mourning period', he told the household. 'Begin preparations for the puja.' The women of the house agreed. Father was still curious. He was determined to find

the truth.

"Four of my brothers, my cousin and father prepared for a midnight rendezvous with the ghost. They packed rice and dhal, palm-leaf mats and lanterns. After an elaborate prayer they decided to leave. The women of the household were worried. They prayed for their menfolk's safe return. I prayed for the long life of my brothers, cousin and father. My father suggested that I go along with the group.

"We settled under a banyan tree. After a long silence we heard a woman talk to herself. We lit our lanterns. My brother couldn't light his lantern. He blamed it on the ghost. My cousin said, 'Bring the wick up. It will burn steadily.' And it did!

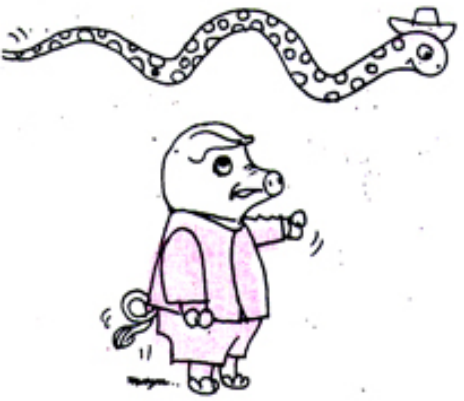
"We walked in the direction of the voice. My eldest brother, Shakti thrust the lantern in my hand and walked ahead of the group. Soon, we lost sight of him in the dark of the night. We could hear footsteps. We heard my eldest brother shout, 'So, it was you!'

"We walked faster. Father brought the lantern to face the two forms. It was Shanta. She was struggling to free herself from Shakti's hold. Shanta was forcibly married off by her uncle. She had been widowed a year after her marriage. Shanta's one-year-old child and her husband had died one after the other due to some illness. Shanta never got over this shock. She roamed the village, searching for her husband and child, who she thought were lost.

"Next morning we took Shanta home. She stayed with us, forever. I still remember my mother's tears when she saw us return home," concluded great grandpa.

It took Preetha, Santhosh and Ashok a long time to get over the thrill of listening to a true adventure story.

Sitara Sethumadhavan, age 13,
Al Rayyan National (Pvt.) School,
Abu Dhabi



MAN AND ANIMAL

A glutton, we say, eats like a pig,
He doesn't eat like a man.
A cheat, we say, is slimy like a snake,
He doesn't act like a man.
A shrewd man watches like a hawk,
He is not negligent like a man.

M. Sreenivasa Manoj, Std. VIII A
LFMH School, Anantapur

NEWS BITS

Orissa's sorrow

A super cyclone hit coastal Orissa in late October. It caused massive damage to life and property. About 10 million people were affected. For two days entire Orissa was totally cut away from the rest of the country.

* A farmer before his devastated home.

People went hungry for days. Tonnes of food suplies and medicines are still being rushed to the state. Considerable sums of money have been announced as relief. Aid is pouring in from outside the country.

Marooned people have also tried their best to cope with life without waiting for outside help.

Pope visits India

Pope John Paul II visited India for two days in early November. The Pope's visit had provoked a few organisations into staging protest rallies.

Despite this the Pope's visit passed off peacefully. The Pope is visiting India for the second time in 13 years.

Winner, twice over

South African novelist, J.M. Coetzee has won the prestigeous Booker prize. He has won the prize for the second time. This is the first time a novelist has won the Booker prize twice. He bagged the award for his book **Disgrace**.

Goodbye, Mr. Cold!

A nasal spray containing zinc can reduce the period of common cold from a week to a day. A California - based company claims that its experiment with such a nasal spray on 104 people has been a success. It reduces the duration of cold from nine days on an average to 1½ days.

Great book!

A 15th century illuminated manuscript is expected to fetch one million pounds. An auction will be held in London in December. The manuscript was believed to have been made for a French patron and collector.

* Pope John Paul II

GRANDMA WORM

I'm very angry with my mother. She doesn't give me any pocket money. I have promised her that I shall save some money. She's not convinced. Why is she behaving like this?

Bhargavi Parab, age 11, IESS, Mumbai.

Dear Bhargavi,

Try to convince your mother that you are mature enough to handle money. Tell her what you are going to do with the money. Also convince her that your studies will not suffer. I am sure she'll fall in with your views.

I am in VI standard. I'd love to wish friends on their birthday. I wonder if my friends would think that I am doing so only in the hope of getting a treat from them. What shall I do?

G. Dharshana, age 11, SBOA School, Madurai.

Dear Dharshana,

What's wrong in wishing a friend on her birthday? Develop a more positive attitude.

I am a computer games addict. I always want a new game to play. How do I rid myself of this problem?

D. Arvind, age 12, AECS, Mumbai.

Dear Arvind,

Cheer up! Allocate separate time for your various activities. Why don't you learn about the internet? Try to use your computer knowledge judiciously.

What do you think will be the most simple, interesting and inexpensive present for one's birthday? Will wishing them on their birthday be the most inexpensive gift?

T.A. Saisudha, Std. XI, NHS., Calcutta.

Dear Saisudha,

Gifts can be of various types. The simplest are flowers and sweets. Books can also be given. Try to find out what your friend is interested in. A table clock or book can be very effective.

I always take part in the elocution competitions held in school. I try my best. But I come only second. My friend always bags the first prize.

Roopa Menon, Std. IX, Mumbai.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THESE WORDS STAND FOR?

PUZZLE

1. Ethnology — *The study of races of mankind.*
2. Genealogy — *The study of history of descent of man.*
3. Oology — *The study of eggs.*
4. Ichthyology — *The study of fishes.*
5. Vexillology — *The study of flags.*
6. Campanology — *The study of bells.*

Dear Roopa,

Congrats for doing consistently well in the elocution competitions. You are second to none. Try harder. I am sure you will succeed.

I am in Std. VII. I am a tall, slim girl. I am dark. Everyone else in my family is fair. I love playing in the sun. Thus I have tanned considerably.

None of my classmates has ever teased me because I'm black. My family, however, scoff at me. My older brother, is kind to me. Can I use fairness creams? I go easy on ghee, cheese, custard and butter. I don't like greens. My skin is oily. I love chocolates. I hate milk.

A.A. Nishitha, Std. VII B,
Presentation HS, Calicut.

Dear Nishitha,

Shield your face from the sun. Read the 'Hello, doctor!' column in Gokulam (Oct. '99) for advice on oily skin. Consult a doctor before using fairness creams. People give more importance to personality than colour. Maintain a healthy diet and eat plenty of vegetables.

I usually stand first or second in my class. Handwriting is my problem. I find it difficult to maintain the same hand for both English and Tamil.

G. Jayashree, age 12,
A.V. Meiyappan MHSS, Chennai.

Dear Jayashree,

Practice makes one perfect. Since they are two different languages your handwriting will change. Try to write a neat hand.

I am a great fan of our school ASPL (Assistant School Pupil Leader). She is the best athlete. I want to speak to her. I have collected plenty of information about her. My friend has kept me uptodate about her. How can I get her to speak to me?

Jayalakshmi, Std. IX,
FRSK HSS, Trichy.

Dear Jayalakshmi,

Ask your friend to introduce you to the ASPL or you could approach the ASPL and introduce youself to her. Tell her you are a great fan of hers. All the best!

Love,
Grandma worm

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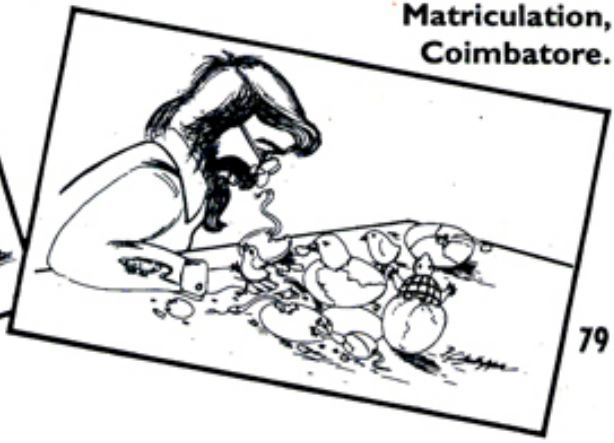
7. Herpetology — *The study of reptiles.*
8. Trichology — *The study of hair.*
9. Oneirology — *The study of dreams*
10. Cardiology — *The study of heart ailments.*
11. Palaeontology — *The study of fossils.*
12. Endocrinology — *The study of endocrine glands.*
13. Pedology — *The study of soil.*
14. Seismology — *The study of regions under seismic zone.*
15. Cytology — *The study of cells.*

R. Vidya, VII B,
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Matriculation,
Coimbatore.



SPORTS PAGE

* Aarthi Ramaswamy

Cricket

The third test between India and NewZealand ended in a draw, like the first match. Captain Sachin Tendulkar was visibly happy after winning his first home series. He made his first double century in this series.

The second one day inter- national went India's way after Sachin and his team put up a staggering 376 for 2. The kiwis lost the match by 174 runs. The third match also went India's way with Ganguly becoming the man of the match with a smashing 153 not out. The fourth match ended with India losing to the kiwis by 48 runs. Thus the five match series stood evenly poised at 2 - 2 and created a lot of interest in the finals, which the Indians won convincingly

* Malcolm Marshall

Chess

Aarthi Ramaswamy claimed the under 18 world championship in Spain. Aarthi, hailing from Chennai is 18. She's doing her second year in college. She defeated Wang Yu, her Chinese rival. Koneru Humpy (8) landed the silver medal. She was the 1998 world champion.

Carribean hurricane

A pace bowler from the Carribean, Malcolm Marshall was a terror. Even players like Gavas kar and Vengsarkar had a testing time facing him. Marshall died of colon cancer at the age of 41.

Marshall was the idol to several bowlers both in West Indies and in India.

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SPOT THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES

Answers : 1. Book, 2. Spectacles, 3. Pen, 4 Boy's lip, 5. Boy's shoes, 6. Branch, 7. Bird.

Help the elephant reach the sugarcanes

IDENTIFY THIS FESTIVAL

Ans : Rakshabandhan

COLOUR THIS

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